No. 16

BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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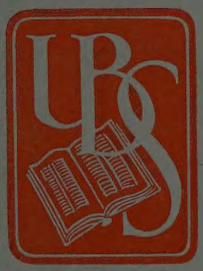

1953
FOURTH QUARTER

146, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

A WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE SOCIETIES.

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FOURTH QUARTER - 1953

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Contributors to this issue :

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The Rev. C. W. Turner is Secretary of the Joint Agency of the American Bible Society and the British & Foreign Bible Society for Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The Rev. A. M. Chirgwin is Research Secretary of the United Bible Societies, working from Geneva. Earlier this year he paid a visit to Central and North America on behalf of the U.B.S.

The Rev. B. J. Tidball is Secretary for Youth and Education of the British & Foreign Bible Society.

The Rev. L. V. D. Ashley is Assistant Secretary of the Joint Bible Society Agency in Ethiopia.

Editorial

AN important part of this issue is devoted to reports on the place of the Bible in Roman Catholicism. It is not the first time that we have drawn the attention of our readers to that notable trend in the life of the Roman Catholic Church to-day. We are glad, however, that Dr. Turner points out some aspects of the resistance within the Roman Church to this movement. The two articles on colportage efforts in Central America and in Belgium eloquently confirm this warning. There is a biblical renewal in the Roman Catholic Church ; but it still affects relatively small groups only, and between the lines, as it were, one feels the Church's lead in relation to it to be very cautious. They do not forget that the greatest shock which the Roman Catholic Church ever had to sustain and which almost disrupted it—the Reformation—sprang from the biblical movement of the XVth century.

To-day the Roman Catholic Church in general is more evangelical than it was five centuries ago ; it ignores on the whole the corruption which so much upset Luther and the other reformers. Many of its children think that, if handled carefully and properly, the atomic energy of God's Word will not explode but will help the Church to become more faithful, by breathing a new life into it. It is as if, among some Roman Catholics, the conviction was growing that in fighting against secularism and its temptations, against materialism and its excesses, against the many kinds of superstition inherited from the dark ages or developed in our day, the Bible and only the Bible will be able to give to the Church its power to resist and to counter attack.

This attitude, in some ways very familiar to us, nevertheless does not indicate any fundamental change in the Roman conception of the relation between the Bible and the Church. The latter keeps the priority. In that sense the outlook is entirely different from ours, in the Bible Societies, who are more concerned with the salvation of " individual souls " and their eventual grouping into churches. It is very significant that the concern for the Bible, among Roman Catholics, goes hand in hand with the concern for a renewal of the liturgy. I do not know of any group interested in the wider distribution and knowledge of the Scripture which is not at the same time active in advocating the adaptation of the liturgy to the needs of modern man and a more intelligent and thoughtful use of it on the part of both clergy and laymen.

Again and again in the literature published by these groups, the close relation between liturgy and the Bible is stressed, the liturgy being validated—as it were substantiated, by the Bible. This fact, I think, helps us greatly in locating the source of the biblical renewal in the Roman Catholic Church. We must rejoice at seeing it, but we have also to recognise its limits. The Church seems to be willing to give to the Bible a place of honour such as it has not enjoyed for centuries. But every effort is made to control its action and to see that the clergy keep the movement in hand. However, of this we are sure : none of these barriers, these notes and comments, these biblical guides and " directed " commentaries, will be sufficient to channel the power of God's Word . . . . . if this is the time God has chosen for the Church of Rome to make His Word heard anew.

NEWS OF THE WORLD.

North Africa

MR. L. R. STEDEFORD, who recently succeeded the Rev. J. M. Roe as B.F.B.S. Secretary for the North Africa Agency, made a tour of Morocco earlier in the year. "In assessing the general missionary position of the country," he says, "the dominant impression remaining in the mind is the common experience of all Moslem countries—the lack of visible results in spite of many years of devoted toil by missionaries. It requires deep faith and high courage on the part of many working in isolated and difficult places to continue through the long years as they do. Even so, it is an inspiring and humbling experience to meet native Christians who stand firm in the face of persecution ..... A native Church there is none, nor, from a purely human point of view, is there likely to be one in the forseeable future.'

One of the main issues that arose out of Mr. Stedeford's Moroccan visit was the revived discussion as to the possibility of having a Union Arabic version of the Bible in the colloquial speech of the people. A form of journalistic Arabic prevails in the region and it is thought that a Union Version would be both possible and desirable—an idea which was considered by the Bible Society before the war. The question of a Union Version for use in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia is under discussion.

"Even a brief visit to Morocco," writes Mr. Stedeford, "reveals that it is a country which is developing with incredible speed. Everywhere new towns are springing up beside the age-old native cities ..... It is a forward-looking country—a fact which gives even greater importance to the work of making the Bible known there."

Burma

The centenary of the publication of the Bible into their language is being celebrated in November by the Sgaw Karen people.

It was one of the first American Baptist missionaries to Burma, the Rev. Jonathan Wade, who reduced the Karen speech to writing and began around 1820 on the work of translating the Bible. When he was obliged through ill-health to return to America, the work was carried on by the Rev. Francis Mason, aided by a Karen convert and scholar. The complete Karen Bible was first published in 1853. The B.F.B.S. has assisted in the production of these early editions. To-day the Rev. H. C. Willans, B.F.B.S. Secretary in Rangoon, writes :

"Many thousands of Karen Bibles have been distributed in the past 100 years, printed by the American Baptist Mission at its press in Rangoon, or by the British and Foreign Bible Society in London. Now that the American Baptist Mission Press is closed, the Bible Society prints all the Bibles for the churches in Burma. In the six years since the war, the Bible Society has put into circulation more than 15,000 Sgaw Karen Bibles and 7,000 New Testaments. Apart from the ordinary editions, the Society issued the small Bible on special Indian paper, and has also reprinted the large Pulpit Bible. This year the Society is taking a special part in the Sgaw Karen Bible Centenary celebrations by publishing Bibles and New Testaments with a special inscription printed in gold on the cover. This reads : 'Sgaw Karen Bible Centenary 1853-1953. Thy Word is Truth'."

The Karen people still call the Bible 'the Golden Book.'

Canada

The *B.F.B.S. in Canada* has agreed to distribute up to 50,000 Bibles per year to Canadian schools, with the expressed desire that these become the personal property of the pupils receiving them. This is part of the effort of the Society to recall Canada to the Bible.

*

" The Bible in Canada," which has just been published in Toronto, tells the story of Bible Society work in Canada since its beginnings in 1804. As a historian the author, Mr. E. C. Woodley, tells of the growth of the Bible Society within the wider setting of the historical development of Canada. The reader thus is given a vivid picture of the history of the Canadian people during the past 150 years and of the way in which the Bible Society has responded to the need for Scriptures. This need is both linguistic and geographical : language requirements within Canada range from those of the Mohawk Indians, who had their first Gospel printed in their own language in 1787, to those of more recent times, such as of allied service men who trained in Canada during the second World War, and of recent settlers from both eastern and western Europe; geographically the needs extend across the 3,000 miles which Canada covers from coast to coast.

This book, published by Dent, is very readable, is attractively produced, and will provide interesting and timely reading for all concerned for the fellowship of Bible Societies throughout the world.

Denmark

The annual meeting of the board of directors of the *Danish Bible Society* was held on 6th May, 1953. Elections were held, and the diocesan prefect Hvidt, who has been on the board since 1930, resigned. The diocesan prefect Ove Larsen, Copenhagen, was elected in his place.

The past year has been a quiet one, as the Danish Bible Society has been compelled to consolidate its finances, and for this reason to be rather restrained regarding new projects.

The great increase in the cost of paper, salaries, etc., which followed the war encroached perceptibly on the reserves of the Bible Society. The Society did not increase the price of its publications until 1st July, 1952, and 1st January, 1953, nearly eight years after the close of the war, and had kept its pre-war prices in order to be able to offer the Danish people cheap editions.

However, also since the last increase in prices the Danish Bible Society has maintained its principle of selling certain editions of the Bible and New Testament at rates that are *below* the cost of production. Furthermore thousands of Bibles and New Testaments are distributed each year free of charge or at reduced prices to people who are not able to pay for a Bible.

At the meeting the Treasurer, Mr. Frimodt, expressed his conviction that the Danish Bible Society will soon have overcome its financial difficulties, thanks to the Danish Church, whose members make a collection each year on New Year's day in aid of the Bible Society.

It does not follow that because the past year has been a quiet one nothing has happened. A new edition of the New Testament has been published in a long format, bound together with the book of Psalms. Among the events of the year must be mentioned the authorisation by the King of a new translation of the Apocrypha, so that the Bible Society now can start printing.

This book has been omitted for several years from our Bible editions, but will soon appear again. A new dictionary for the New Testament is also ready in manuscript and will soon be printed.

For some time the commentaries edited by the Bible Society on the historical books of the Old Testament have been out of print. The Society is now preparing an entirely new series of commentaries on the whole Bible, many of those on the historical books of the Old Testament being ready for print.

The collection which the Bible Society received from the Danish Church on New Year's Day in 1952, amounted to a little over 117,000 Crowns. This collection is being used by the Society for distributing the Scriptures free of charge or at reduced rates.

During the year 1952, 78,782 Scriptures were sold or distributed. Of these around 55,000 were New Testaments. A little more than 5,000 were distributed free ; 14,000 at half rate of the rest, about 60,000, through bookshops.

The Danish Bible Society also publishes a Bible Reading Plan which is distributed free in all Danish churches on New Year's Day. Last year 125,000 copies were printed.

At the meeting of the board in May, the General Secretary of the United Bible Societies, Mr. Olivier Béguin, was present. This was his first visit to Denmark. Mr. Béguin was welcomed by the President of the board, His Excellency Mr. Frolund. Mr. Béguin gave an address, in the course of which he gave his views on the relation between the United Bible Societies and the Danish Bible Society.

England

The Third Jubilee celebrations of the British and Foreign Bible Society open with an inaugural service in St. Paul's Cathedral on 20th October, with the theme " The Bible speaks to-day." The programme in London extends over more than a year, concluding with a Thanksgiving Service also in St. Paul's, on 4th December, 1954. Other special events taking place during the year—in addition to the many local Bible weeks, exhibitions and campaigns —include a pageant written by Mr. John Stirling, entitled " Exciting News," which is to be performed in Southwark Cathedral, a Jubilee Concert in the Royal Festival Hall—conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent—and a Women's Rally.

*

The British and Foreign Bible Society announces the following recent publications :

A special edition of St. Mark's Gospel in Ewe, in phonetic orthography, with illustrations and in large type.

St. John's Gospel in Pana—a language spoken by a small tribe of 18,000 people in the province of Ubangi-Chari, French Equatorial Africa. This translation was made by Miss Estelle Myers, translator of the New Testament into Karra.

A tentative edition of St. Matthew in modern Russian. The Commission working in Paris on a revision of the New Testament into modern Russian has completed a tentative edition of St. Matthew. The B.F.B.S. is sending out

1,000 copies to Russians in Europe and America, asking them for comments on the new versions. It is hoped that the work on the New Testament will be completed early in 1954.

The complete Bible in Nupe—a language spoken by two million people living round the Upper Niger. The New Testament was published in 1916 and now the whole Bible has been published for the first time. The language was first reduced to writing by Bishop Adjai Crowther (the rescued slave boy) who translated the Yoruba Bible.

France

A recent report given by the General Secretary of the *French Bible Committee* includes the following information :—

During the past year the Société Biblique de France has published its "Home Bible"; the French Bible Committee, in collaboration with the Belgian Bible Society, has published the Book of Acts in magazine format, which is meeting with great success; also a pamphlet "Presentation of the Bible," completing a "Guide to the Bible" began the previous year. An illustrated Gospel of St. Luke in large type has been set and will be available in October.

The French Bible Committee has again taken part in the "Paris Fair," the Bible being given a prominent place on the stand for "Protestant Press and publications."

Work of house-to-house colportage continues.

The Bible exhibition which has been shown in sixteen large cities has met with notable success. It has been visited by more than 80,000 individuals and has provided many interesting and varied contacts. It has been supported by government and municipal authorities and in many cases the Roman Catholic Church itself has associated itself with the effort. Lectures in connection with the exhibition have met with the greatest success.

Monsieur Blumenthal concludes his report with the hope that the French Committee will be given a clearer vision of the missionary work of a Bible Society. "May this missionary spirit," writes Monsieur Blumenthal, "permeate anew all our work and may the direction of our work in the coming months bring us nearer to the goal, shared by all Bible Societies in the world : 'To make the Bible available to every man.' May God help us to give this witness faithfully."

*

An important regional fair takes place annually in Roanne, a small town in central France. For the first time this year, as a result of the Bible exhibition shown there in June, the evangelical churches decided to organise a Bible stand at the fair. The local committee (interdenominational) for the promotion of Bible campaigns, which prepared the visit of the exhibition and continued to meet for prayer, assumed responsibility for the stand.

Pastor Roger Grossi, chairman of the committee, wrote recently to the French Bible Committee : "Thanks to you, we have been able for the first time to carry out a united effort, on a basis of complete spiritual harmony, along with the other evangelical groups in our town. Through lectures we were able to make public witness to our central beliefs in the authority of the Scriptures, and we are convinced that this testimony will be valuable in facilitating our work in the future and in accomplishing our ministry."

Germany

The draft list of passages for the next four years' period of the " Bible Reading Plan " was presented recently at a meeting of the working committee for the Plan, which took place in Kassel at the invitation of Kirchenrat Dr. Erich Stange, leader of the German Y.M.C.A.

This Plan was started a hundred years ago by the German Y.M.C.A. Its Bible reading lists were adopted successively by various groups in the churches and are now reproduced in many evangelical publications, papers and calendars and even by the Bible publishing house of the Roman Catholic church in Stuttgart. Several million copies of these lists are circulated, some of them accompanied with appropriate commentaries. The World's Y.M.C.A. and World's Y.W.C.A. in Geneva adopted them last year and reproduced over 150,000 copies in 10 languages and are circulating them even more widely this year.

As Pastor Adamek (Marburg), who is responsible for the working out of the plan, pointed out at the meeting in his survey of the next four years' Plan, passages for each year are grouped around a complete Gospel and are chosen in such a way that the whole Bible is covered over a period of years.

The meeting was also addressed by Pastor Dr. Schäfer (Osnabruck) who, under the theme " The Problem of the Bible-reading Parish To-day ", called attention to the importance of a quiet time for a real reading of the Bible, and he emphasised the danger of Bible reading as a routine matter. He stressed in particular the need to provide for those who are opposed to the Bible, the means of understanding its message in the context of present-day life.

*

The Stuttgart Bible Society announces the preparation of a Hebrew Concordance. There were Hebrew concordances in existence in earlier decades, produced by courageous publishers. But these works have been out of print for a long time and requests are continually being made for such a concordance by lecturers and students of theology, and also by pastors in all countries who are students of the Bible text.

Dr. Gerhard Lisowsky, of Berlin, has undertaken the work of indexing and collating the passages, with the collaboration of Professor Dr. Leonhard Rost, Professor of Old Testament in the theological faculty of Berlin University.

Since the setting of such a concordance would be too expensive, the manuscript prepared by Dr. Lisowsky is going to be photo-copied. The Stuttgart Bible Society has been most fortunate in having in Dr. Lisowsky not only a first class scholar but also a perfect calligrapher, so that the final production will appear almost like a type-set edition.

The work, which will appear in the same format as the Kittel Bible, and will start to come out in the first half of 1955 in instalments, will consist of about 1,600 pages. The Stuttgart Bible Society is preparing a prospectus in English which will be available at the beginning of 1954. Orders for copies (free of charge) can be sent to Stuttgart. (Stuttgart Bible Society, Hauptstädterstrasse 51-B, Stuttgart S.)

Hungary

Reporting at the meeting of the Eastern Section of the World Presbyterian Alliance on the situation of the churches in Hungary, Bishop Peter of the Hungarian Reformed Church referred to the important part played by the Bible and its study in the Church's life to-day :

" Signs of renewal in our Church include a growing interest in theological activities, with special characteristics. Professors and students of our colleges have been in closer touch with the congregations than ever before. Professors of theology have been willing to spend days and weeks in local congregations, or with conferences of Ministers ; Ministers have been ready to spend considerable time in conferences on theological questions (just before we left Hungary we spent two weeks with 100 Ministers and ten professors, in Biblical study). It should be noted, both that this theological revival is taking place for the sake of our actual congregations—and that it involves a deepened Biblical orientation. The latter is also shown by the strongly-felt need for a new translation of the Bible, provisional drafts of which are being widely studied and criticised in our congregations ; and as a result, the preaching of the Gospel in those congregations has itself become more interesting and relevant (not an abstract theoretical survey, but the living word to living people).

* * *

The Executive Secretary of the Old Testament Commission of the Revision Committee of the Hungarian Bible, Professor Dr. L. Pakozdi contributes an interesting introduction to the second instalment of the Hungarian new revision which contains the book of Exodus, on the way the work is being carried out. The major part of the introduction translates, for the benefit of the non-Hungarian reader, some of the explanatory notes which the Commission feels need to be added to the text in order to facilitate understanding of the latter. In another section Professor Pakozdi refers to the interest that has been aroused in large sections of the Church by the work of the Commission :

" Our Genesis instalment is now being frequently discussed at pastors' meetings and in study groups. Already our Commission has a considerable store of critical comments for consideration. Not only learned pastors but also the unknown " quiet in the land " offer their comments on the work of the Old Testament (and New Testament) Commission. May I take the liberty of citing just one instance of this co-operation. The " renouveau biblique " in Hungary has inspired some laymen too to study the original Greek of the New Testament. But we were surprised and moved to learn of the efforts to learn even the Hebrew of the Old Testament. There lives in Miskolc, the largest industrial town of the countryside, a merchant by the name of B.S. This man wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Old Testament Commission, asking for an interview on the Genesis translation. The letter indicated expert knowledge of the Old Testament text and closed with the quotation from the Hebrew Old Testament of Psalm 8:3. I had the impression (merchant with a knowledge of Hebrew) that the writer must be a converted Jew who may have had some Rabbinical training. In the late hours of a Saturday night when, because of the bad weather, I had not expected visitors, a man of about 40 called on me. He had got on his way after his working hours and had trouble with his motor-cycle on the way. He produced from his bag the Mandelkern Concordance and other aids to Bible reading. We talked well beyond midnight. I learned, by the way, that he was not of Jewish origin. He was converted by an evangelistic service after the war and became eagerly interested in the Bible. As a merchant he often came into contact with Jews whom he tried to win for Christ. Yet whenever he referred to his Old Testament evidences in the Karolyi Bible, he got the answer that the original text had a different meaning. So he acquired some grammatical equipment and began to learn the Hebrew language. (The Mandelkern Concordance alone cost him 600 Forints !) Lack of space prevents me from telling in detail what

this man had done out of his pure love of the Word and of his Jewish fellowmen until he had got as far as to be able to study the Genesis translation, noting, for instance, all verses which, in his opinion, could be rendered still more faithfully and in a better concordance with the relevant parallels. In his Mandelkern Concordance he had written in, at every verse, the text of our translation, in small, in fact hardly legible, script. It is not necessary to tell more about this nocturnal talk of a professor and a merchant on embodying the Word of God of the Old Testament in Hungarian words. Our readers will feel the joy of the professor and his thankfulness for this symbolic incident. This case also belongs to the spiritual background of the new Hungarian Bible Revision. And the answer of our Commission can only be our renewed sense of obligation, inspiration and courage. And this case, even in its singularity, is a token of the fact that our revision work is being done in a living church the people of which are eagerly interested in our undertaking."

India

The Women's Branch in Calcutta of the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* held a special service in Carey Church, Calcutta, during their celebration of Bible Sunday.

On a lectern in the centre of the church stood the large Bible used in Imphal during the siege, and on the walls were brightly-coloured Bible verses and posters illustrating the work of the B.S.I.P.C.

At the crowded evening service a student from the Naga Hills, clad in her tribal costume, gave a moving testimony to the value of the Bible in her life. She was followed by a European business man who spoke of the inspiration he had drawn from his Bible, during many years of strenuous life. The Secretary of the Women's Branch of the Calcutta Auxiliary then told the congregation of the place of the Bible in communist China and in Korea.

Israel

An edition of the Bible has been published in Jerusalem after years of preparation and with the support of the Israel Ministry of Education. The edition of 10,000 copies, with 1,387 pages gives the Old Testament in Hebrew script. This edition is the work of the late Professor Umberto Cassuto and is the first impression of the Bible produced in the State of Israel.

Japan

Following the publication of a colloquial translation of the Gospel of Mark, the Japan Bible Society has now published Genesis and the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John in a similar translation. The colloquial version of the Gospels and Acts have also been printed in a large format suitable for use by church school students. A concordance committee has also been organised as a sub-committee of the Literature commission to publish a concordance for the colloquial version of the Bible.

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The churches in Maizuru port recently arranged for Scripture to be given to Japanese repatriates from Manchuria as they reached Japan. The Bible Society arranged a similar distribution at the port of Hokkaido.

The summer months brought eccentric weather to Japan—heavy rains, temperatures both exceptionally high and exceptionally low—and with the typhoon season still to come (September), both government and people were facing it with some sense of apprehension when the Rev. T. Miyakoda, General Secretary of the *Japan Bible Society*, sent the following account of the floods that occurred last June :—

" The worst flood was that in Northern Kyushu. More than a million persons lost their homes and 1,700 died. There are about 70 churches in the area and about 5,000 Christians were among the homeless. There are seven Christian high schools and two colleges in the region, and the total number of students affected by the disaster was placed at more than 10,000. Besides churches and schools, many Christian kindergartens and Christian social institutions in the area were damaged.

" In our Bible work many supporting members and churches suffered. We have sent out cards asking about their condition and have received answers from all of them. Our colporteurs in those areas are safe, although one colporteur's stock was drowned. Book stocks that are connected with us are safe, though some book stores were flooded with water ; they had protected their Bible stocks carefully.

"After the floods many requests for Scriptures came to the Bible Society, and our colporteurs report that they have been busy distributing Scriptures.

" We have given pulpit Bibles to two churches, one in Kyushu and one in Wakayama, where theirs were lost in the flood."

During the nation-wide coal strikes at the end of last year one of the volunteer colporteurs, O. Murakami, distributed more than ten thousand copies of Scriptures for the Japan Bible Society, with the aid of the young people of the church. Mr. Murakami distributed Scriptures to the families of the coal miners in the Yahata district, the largest coal mine and steel manufacturing district in Japan.

During a recent visit to Okinawa by the Rev. T. Miyakoda, General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society, an *Okinawa Bible Committee*, composed of the various denominational leaders, was set up with an executive committee and a half-time secretary, who was to take up office in September. The Japan Bible Society will provide Scriptures to the Okinawa Bible Committee at a 30% discount.

The conditions in the island are described by Mr. Miyakoda as follows :

" The Christian groups in Okinawa at present are : Church of Christ of Okinawa (a Union of Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, American Baptist and Holiness groups) ; Episcopal Church ; Seventh-Day Adventist and Church of Christ. There are about 20 churches belonging to the Church of Christ of Okinawa and about 10 churches to the other three denominations. The total church attendance is estimated to be about 5,000, out of a total population of 900,000. The Buddhist and Shintoist influences in Okinawa are weak compared with Japan. Here lies the big opportunity for the Christian churches to enter Okinawa. There is an urgent need for training Okinawa men to be ministers among the people, and until the vacancies are filled a supply from Japanese churches is called for.

"As far as Scriptures are concerned, the supply from Japan has been small and I noticed church people were carrying very old or broken paper-covered Bibles and Testaments. No Bibles were to be seen in the bookshops. Church people have been able to get some Bibles through American chaplains or from friends in Japan. But generally speaking they have been without Bibles throughout the war and post-war years. I visited churches, hospitals, many different social institutions conducted by government and churches, and was told that there have been very few Bibles in Okinawa, though people have been wishing to read them.

Kenya

The first week of July last was observed in Kenya as Bible Week. In a broadcast from Nairobi, which opened the Week, Sir Evelyn Baring, Governor of the Colony, gave the following message to the organisers : " Love for and understanding of the greatest of all books, the Bible, is something which cannot receive too much encouragement. I welcome this opportunity of giving my whole-hearted support to all those who are organising Bible Week in Kenya and I wish their efforts every success." The Postmaster General also co-operated by arranging that all letters posted in Nairobi during that Week were overprinted with the words : " Kenya Bible Week, June 28—July 5." Services of thanksgiving were held in the Cathedral and in all the churches, public meetings, lectures and concerts were held and films shown.

A Bible Exhibition, " The most valuable thing that this world affords " was also arranged.

Observance of Bible Week in other parts of the colony included a 24-hour vigil of prayer at St. Christopher's Church in Nakuru ; a performance of " The Story of a Book " by the Theatre Club in Kitale, and a combined mass open-air service at the lakeside in Kisumu, at the head of the Victoria Nyanza. " Never," writes Mr. Bedford, B.F.B.S. Secretary for East Africa, " have I seen so many religious denominations working in the one cause."

Korea

The *Korean Bible Society* has made the following arrangements for commemorating the Third Jubilee of Bible Society work in 1954 :

A thanksgiving service will be held in Pusan on the second Sunday in March, 1954, at which a thanksgiving offering will be collected and forwarded to the British and Foreign Bible Society ;

A pamphlet is being produced giving a brief history of B.F.B.S. work during the past 150 years.

A daily Bible Reading List is being published for 1954 with special reference to the Jubilee celebrations.

New Zealand

" How the Bible Came to New Zealand " is the title of a booklet (price 1/6) specially produced by the *B.F.B.S. in New Zealand* in connection with the Third Jubilee. The first half gives the story of the beginning and growth of Bible Society work. From a brief sketch of the background of the Bible

and its original languages, an account is given in summarised form of the coming of the Bible to Britain, the early translations and the beginning of the B.F.B.S. With this background the story continues of the spread of Bible Society work in India, Africa, the Pacific area and New Zealand. Space is given to the translation and spread of the Scriptures in Maori and the formation and responsibilities of the Bible Society in New Zealand.

Philippines

A missionary organisation working entirely by means of the radio is the Far East Broadcasting Company. Included in its programmes are broadcasts concerning the Scriptures. One such programme, initiated three years ago, is called " The Bible School of the Air." It offers a free correspondence course to all who enrol. The teacher gives the lesson over the radio each week and the students receive their instruction sitting in their own home. So far 25,000 students have enrolled. " Many scores of these " writes the Director, " have come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour as a result of this study."

" The Bible School of the Air " continues the Director, " is conducted in English and Tagolog—the national language of the Philippines. In connection with this broadcast many Bibles have been sent out to students.

" In other of our broadcasts we have also distributed many Bibles. In our Bukas Na Aklat programme we have distributed well over 1,000 New Testaments in the Tagalog language to those who have written in for them.

" In other dialects of the Philippines we are also distributing New Testaments at the rate of about 100 a month. Many more could be distributed to those inquiring if we had them available."

Scotland

The *National Bible Society of Scotland* recently published the Book of Psalms in Chinamwanga. This is the first part of the Old Testament to be prepared in this language, which is spoken on the borders of Nyasaland and Tanganyika. The first translation was St. Luke's Gospel in 1903 by the Rev. A. Dewar ; the New Testament followed in 1933, translated by Dr. J. A. Chisholm. The Book of Psalms has been prepared by Mr. Caleb Sikaundi and the Rev. Fergus Macpherson. Mr. Dewar, Dr. Chisholm and Mr. Macpherson have all been missionaries from Scotland, and all publications in Chinamwanga have been produced by the National Bible Society of Scotland.

In Scotland the Bible Campaign in connection with the Third Jubilee is being inaugurated by a broadcast service on Sunday, 25th October. The service will be conducted by the Rt. Rev. K. C. H. Warner, Bishop of Edinburgh and Chairman of the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the Rev. Alexander R. Fraser, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. The Rt. Rev. Professor J. Pitt-Watson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will preach the sermon.

In both Edinburgh and Glasgow the last week of October has been chosen as Bible Week.

The joint committee sponsoring the Campaign in Scotland has the support of and represents practically all the churches and many inter-denominational bodies, including the Scottish Churches' Ecumencial Committee, the National Bible Society of Scotland, the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. and others.

*

The N.B.S.S. invites entries for a Bible Weeks Competition. All who are interested are asked to send in the text of a talk on the Authority of the Bible, intended for young people.

The idea of the Competition arose out of a discussion by the Committee organising the Bible Week in Scotland, on how to prepare a short talk for young people explaining what is meant by the "Authority" of the Bible. The Committee encountered various difficulties :—the difficulty of knowing the best age-group to cater for ; the difficulty of selecting the right line of approach ; and the difficulty of finding the right words to bring the message home to the hearer (or reader). What is needed is a statement from someone with a clear idea of what to look for in the Bible, and also with a flair for simple expression and illustration so that the younger generation can at once appreciate what is meant.

Switzerland

"Floodtide," the periodical of the Christian Literature Crusade, reports in its July-August issue on the work of four brothers and sisters in St. Gallen who, within the last two years, came one after the other to be called to the work of spreading the "Good News."

The action is an individual one, but gifts have come in from various parts and the work which started by a distribution campaign in eight mountain villages in a Roman Catholic area where no Scriptures were available, has now developed so considerably that a committee has been formed with representatives of the Swiss Tract Mission and of the local evangelical bookshops, to direct the work. At first limited to that section of Switzerland, operations have now been extended into neighbouring countries.

The Schmids—the name of the family—started with the free distribution of Gospels, but believing that many copies of the Scriptures distributed in that way would not be valued and appreciated, they changed their method. They began distributing credit-coupons valid for one free Gospel, which was obtainable by returning the coupon with the recipient's name and address. At the last regional fair in St. Gallen, lasting a week, about 6,000 Gospel coupons were distributed, of which 2,000 were signed and Gospels claimed. Bibles and Testaments are sold.

*

The 'Maison de la Bible' in Geneva, which has been distributing Scriptures mainly in the French and Italian speaking parts of Europe and in North Africa for many years and which started its own production during the war, reports that 678,000 copies of the Scriptures (Bibles, Testaments and Gospels) were produced during the war, and 1,595,500 since the end of the war, in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Polish and Russian. Altogether the Maison de la Bible has circulated 6,443,259 Bibles and Portions in 284 lanuages since it started its work in 1926.

Syria and Lebanon

The Syria-Lebanon Sub-Agency of the Bible Society has printed an edition of 50,000 copies of the Gospel of Mark in Arabic, in magazine form, which is meeting with great success.

Turkey

The year 1953 marks the centenary of the completion of the translation of the Bible into modern Armenian.Armenian is one of those languages whose alphabet was invented in order that the Scriptures might be translated. It is also of interest to note that the Bible Societies were at work among the Armenians a quarter of a century before the coming of Protestant missionaries.

United States of America

The *American Bible Society* was notified some time ago by a minister that there was no Bible in the local public library. This gap on the shelves was soon made good, but it led the secretary of the Bible Society to investigate whether the same situation existed in other libraries, or, if Bibles were on their shelves, whether they were ever read.

In the Public Library of New York City it was found that the book that was in as great demand in 1953 as in 1900 was the Bible. In New York Public Library's central circulation branch there are 75 Bibles, in such constant use that they must be replaced several times a year. In addition to the major English versions, the library also carried many foreign translations which are also frequently read.

At the Library for the Blind the Bible both in Braille and on Talking Book Records is extremely popular. Many divinity students have earned their degrees with the help of the latter.

The American Bible Society suggests that someone in every community should see that an adequate supply of Scriptures exists on the shelves of his local Public Library. There should, they suggest, be at least one very large-print New Testament, so that elderly eyes may read it easily. Where possible there should be an assortment of versions for comparative purposes. There might also be Bibles, or at least New Testaments, in the most commonly used languages.

The American Bible Society has just produced the New Testament in the Revised Standard Version on 40 Talking Book Records for the blind. The same New Testament has also just been published in Braille grade 2, in four volumes.

Another new edition published by the A.B.S. is the small volume of Scripture passages in Greek Braille, most copies of which will be used in Greece.

" The Bible Mastery Campaign " is the title given to a campaign for the promotion of Bible reading by urging the reading of one book of the Bible

at a sitting. The campaign began and is still conducted every October under the auspices of the Seattle Presbytery in the State of Washington. It is now observed throughout the United States of America and has been taken up in Canada and in other countries.

Editions of St. Mark's Gospel in diglot form have been published for the first time by the American Bible Society in Conob-Spanish (spoken by 35,000 Indians in a department of Guatemala) and Tchien-English (Liberia). St. John's Gospel has been produced in a similar form in Bassa-English (Liberia).

Miscellaneous

In a report prepared by the Correspondent on Evangelism of the Near East Christian Council, the importance of the use of the Bible in evangelistic work among Muslims is underlined. "The most effective method of evangelism in Muslim lands" states the report, "is personal work, the quiet and friendly telling of the Good News of Christ to individuals. This has always been true in Iran, and is especially true at the present time, when everything that looks like propaganda is suspected and opposed. But when a Muslim convert gathers a few friends in his house, and reads the Bible with them, and tells them what Christ has done for him, who can stop him? Hence the most important thing in promoting evangelism at the present time is to train and inspire the church members to do this kind of work."

United Bible Societies

Up to the end of 1952, the Bible had been translated and published, in whole or in part, in 1,143 languages. The following table shows how these languages are distributed in Continents, and for how many only selections, portions or the New Testament has been provided :

	Bibles	Tests	Portions	Selections	Total
North American Indian	6	14	50	13	83
South American Indian	—	8	26	1	35
Europe	51	19	43	4	117
Africa	47	110	211	24	392
Asia	60	63	116	6	245
Australian and New Zealand	1	1	6	1	9
The Island World ...	32	39	99	33	203
					1,084
Translations for linguistic purposes only (all European)	—	3	54	2	59
	197	257	605	84	1,143

(B) WORLD CIRCULATION BY NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETIES : 1952.

It should be remembered that although the following circulation figures are given by countries, in most of these the work is not done by national Bible Societies, but by the agencies of the larger Societies. Even where the work is carried out by a national Society, these are in many cases supported from abroad.

Country	Bibles	Testaments	Portions	Total
AFRICA :				
North	4,508	6,542	45,932	56,982
South	155,506	67,663	60,612	283,781
East	58,532	55,593	505	114,630
Rhodesias, Madagascar and Portuguese E. Africa...	57,435	60,611	12,087	130,133
West and Equatorial :				
Angola	159	9,254	4,650	14,063
Belgian Congo	18,305	35,391	1,285	54,981
French Equatorial Africa ...	107	5,724	1,500	7,331
French West Africa	1,413	11,230	713	13,356
Gold Coast	43,003	1,837	3,000	47,840
Nigeria	51,163	10,800	3,510	65,473
Sierra Leone	831	102	5,200	6,133
Spanish Guinea	45	—	—	45
St. Helena	30	—	—	30
ARABIA	589	350	1,759	2,698
ARGENTINA	44,073	41,442	930,322	1 ,015,837
AUSTRALIA	40,761	46,092	103,812	190,665
AUSTRIA	11,649	7,093	31,908	50,650
BELGIUM	6,526	4,195	24,494	35,215
BOLIVIA	8,216	13,087	119,397	140,700
BRAZIL	123,905	77,937	1,431,880	1,633,722
BURMA	6,895	4,679	36,006	47,580
CANADA	71,838	81,903	171,073	324,814
CANAL ZONE	978	697	7,146	8,821
CEYLON	2,163	974	28,088	31,225
CHILE	20,420	33,342	132,061	185,823
CHINA	No figures received			
COLOMBIA	8,531	13,467	149,988	171,986
COSTA RICA	2,354	3,510	30,101	35,965
CUBA	17,981	24,583	221,961	264,525
CYPRUS	529	1,295	2,668	4,492
DENMARK	21,178	53,523 *	4,268	78,969
DOMINIAN REPUBLIC ...	2,432	1,769	11,750	15,951
ECUADOR	4,182	5,306	53,867	63,355
EGYPT	6,869	11,467	50,412	68,748
EL SALVADOR	4,199	6,062	85,488	95,749
ENGLAND & WALES... ...	155,942	94,352	123,724	374,018
ETHIOPIA	2,208	1,289	11,464	14,961
FINLAND	16,984	14,465	5,512	36,961
FRANCE	31,027	42,547	105,688	179,262
GERMANY	328,876	201,246	242,985	773,107
GREECE	2,957	23,188	192,318	218,463

* Including 700 New Testaments in Faeroese.

Country	Bibles	Testaments	Portions	Total
GUATEMALA	10,722	12,306	89,976	113,004
HAITI	16,075	7,200	45,750	69,025
HASHEMITE KINGDOM ...	2,307	3,176	7,761	13,244
HONDURAS (British) ...	704	360	—	1,064
HONDURAS	2,256	1,673	40,552	44,481
HONGKONG	24,124	11,846	133,948	169,918
HUNGARY	No figures received			
ICELAND	800	1,200	—	2,000
INDIA & PAKISTAN	40,059	41,121	491,766	572,946
INDO-CHINA	3,403	343	102,218	105,964
INDONESIA	3,416	21,721	50,162	75,299
IRAQ	745	941	9,988	11,674
IRELAND (1951)†	6,325	10,568	60,717	77,610
ISRAEL	11,539	4,515	10,554	26,608
ITALY	6,508	4,812	110,193	121,513
JAPAN	41,921	284,230	1,507,320‡	1,833,471
KOREA	29,061	304,627	616,060	949,748
MALAYA (B.F.B.S. only) ...	1,000	—	—	1,000
MEXICO	29,333	14,112	437,316	480,761
NETHERLANDS	118,399	14,548	71,319	204,266
NEW ZEALAND	19,105	6,784	17,513	43,402
NICARAGUA	2,148	1,992	19,016	23,156
NORWAY	40,284	82,030	11,898	134,212
PACIFIC ISLANDS :				
A.B.S.	22	—	1,000	1,022
Fiji (B.F.B.S.)	34	210	195	439
Oceania (B.F.B.S.)	—	—	980	980
East Indies (B.F.B.S.) ...	25	506	100	631
Samoa	1,286	—	—	1,286
PANAMA	3,707	1,721	10,588	16,016
PARAGUAY	8,018	9,328	46,624	63,970
PERSIA	418	582	20,977	21,977
PERU	19,022	8,035	58,799	85,856
PHILIPPINES	20,800	13,364	49,853	84,017
POLAND	25,675	22,663	86,716	135,054
PORTUGAL	3,980	8,296	225,713	237,989
PUERTO RICO	14,716	20,369	105,965	141,050
SCOTLAND	23,258	18,907§	26,766	68,931
SPAIN	1,615	6,050	22,884	30,549
SWEDEN ¶	4,968	53,400	9,472 ‖	67,840
SWITZERLAND	9,994	4,806	1,200	16,000
THAILAND	997	2,397	258,514	261,908
TURKEY	716	804	17,266	18,786
U.S.A.	569,867	758,326	6,587,088	7,915,281
Miscellaneous	5,504	218	1,551	7,273
URUGUAY	5,456	2,934	68,409	76,799
VENEZUELA	11,982	13,560	230,044	255,586

† Includes circulation abroad.
‡ Includes 5,524 Braille Scriptures.
§ Includes 5,029 Bible readings.
¶ These figures refer to production of one publisher only and do not represent total circulation in Sweden.
‖ Includes 5,818 " Children's Bibles."

Country	Bibles	Testaments	Portions	Total
VIRGIN ISLANDS	898	651	13,625	15,174
WEST INDIES...	22,044	16,911	98,157	137,112
YUGOSLAVIA	15,048	5,127	890	21,065
	2,515,583	2,873,877	16,216,537	21,605,997
Circulation abroad by N.B.S.S. (analysis under countries not yet received) :—				
EUROPE	910	1,029	11,977	13,916
ASIA	9,224	23,035	159,081	191,340
AFRICA	74,092	2,981	3,777	80,850
AMERICA	887	3,902	9,986	14,775
Miscellaneous	500	—	—	500
Grand Totals	2,601,196	2,904,824	16,401,358	21,907,378
1951 Figures	2,643,495	3,231,348	17,392,207	23,267,050
1950 Figures	2,497,208	3,424,748	15,878,271	21,800,227

ECHOS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

THE Standing Committee of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES met in Bad Boll, Germany, in early June with somewhat reduced numbers, since three of its members were unable to attend—Dr. North, the Rev. H. M. Arrowsmith and the Rev. T. Miyakoda. Among those present were, however, the President of the U.B.S., the Rt. Rev. Bishop E. Berggrav and Bishop Noack and Dr. Jorgensen of Denmark, the latter being General Secretary of the Danish Bible Society.

As usual the Committee gave part of its time to a review of the activity of the past year. It was with a great sense of gratitude that it received reports from Bishop Noack, Baron van Tuyll and the General Secretary of progress in various Continental Societies in developing a sense of concern for the production of Scriptures for the mission field. In this connection it was strongly emphasised that in order to avoid overlapping and therefore wastage of resources in the field of distribution as well as in that of translation, the closest co-operation should be maintained between all the Societies in any way active in a given area. This need for co-operation was underlined in respect of translation work, in relation to which it was agreed that a thorough and detailed survey of the situation throughout the world needed to be carried out. Members of the Standing Committee welcomed the news that such a survey had already been considered by the British and Foreign Bible Society, especially in relation to Africa, where this need has been particularly acute.

A good deal of attention was given to the work of the Research Secretary in Geneva, the Rev. Dr. A. M. Chirgwin, whose term of office it was agreed to extend by one year. The Committee welcomed the prospect of Dr. Chirgwin's help until the end of 1954. The Committee authorised the production of various publications, embodying the fruits of Dr. Chirgwin's research. A book bearing the title of " The Cutting Edge " will provide a general study

on the place and use of the Bible in the Church and in evangelism—in the past as well as at the present time. This will appear in the Spring of 1954. The problem of colportage, which has always been a particular concern of the Bible Societies, is to be dealt with in two small pamphlets, one concerned with full-time colportage and the other with the work of part-time or volunteer colporteurs. These pamphlets are designed particularly for the use of colporteurs and of churches and committees desirous of employing this method of evangelism.

The Standing Committee also approved a suggestion of Dr. Chirgwin that he should produce a booklet of biographical sketches of outstanding people connected with Bible work.

Consideration was given to the problem of improving Bible distribution all over the world—a question which has been very much in the mind of many Bible Society leaders during the past few years. For various reasons the scale of colportage work in the post-war period has not been in any way comparable with that preceding World War II. In view of the increased cost of colportage work itself, and of the increasing demand for complete Bibles (half the circulation last year in Africa was of complete Bibles !) it has been felt for some time that colportage work should not be claimed as a monopoly of the Bible Societies nor should it be left exclusively in their hands. Although some " younger " churches and many missionary societies in various countries employ full-time or half-time colporteurs, or Bible women, the Standing Committee considered that the attention of the missionary societies and of the National Christian Councils should be drawn to the urgent necessity for them to take a more responsible and active part in the distribution of the Bible, particularly by means of colportage. The Standing Committee thus decided to send a letter to the missionary societies and to the Christian Councils all over the world, with a request that they should give full attention to this question.

In a similar way it was recognised that the Bible Societies have a responsibility in relation to the churches and that it was their duty to draw the attention of those concerned with and active in evangelism to the experience gathered by the Bible Societies in the field of evangelism through the work of the colporteurs.

The forthcoming Third Jubilee of Bible Society work was prominent in the thought of the Standing Committee. In this connection a proposal submitted by the American Bible Society for world-wide Bible Society advance received favourable consideration. This is not the place to give details of the proposal, but the general aim is to encourage each Society to make a special effort during the year in order to make possible the realisation of the many production projects which at present are in abeyance owing to lack of funds. With the tremendous increase in the number of new literates, special editions of Gospels in large type and with illustrations are badly needed. As the Church in some areas grows and develops, the completion of translation of the Old Testament into the relevant languages is a matter of priority. In other areas revisions are necessary and even if translation and revision do not necessarily involve the missionary societies as well as the Bible Societies in heavy expense, the setting and production of such Scriptures is a very heavy burden to be borne by the Bible Societies. It will, of course, be a matter for each Society to see how the suggested programme can best be adapted to its own situation. On the strength of its experience with the Good Will Book for Japan—in which were collected a quarter-of-a-million signatures in one

year for the production of Scriptures for Japan—the American Bible Society is suggesting that a similar book be compiled as a " World Book of Bible-sharers " in which would be included the signatures of donors to the work of the various Bible Societies from all over the world. Each Society would however, need to decide how the funds collected in its own area could best be used.

Finally, plans were made for the meetings of the U.B.S. which will take place outside London in 1954, in the weeks immediately preceding the celebrations by the B.F.B.S. of its Third Jubilee. The following programme of meetings was adopted :

April 22-24	*Functional Groups* (open to members of Functional Groups and of Council. Visitors are welcome to the Group on Visual Aid).
April 26	*Standing Committee* (morning and afternoon).
April 26-28	*Council* (beginning on the evening of the 26th).
April 28 to (evening) May 1	*Conference* (open to members of Council, Functional Groups, foreign delegates to Third Jubilee).

The programme of the Conference was established as follows :

April 29	morning	THE BIBLE SPEAKS TODAY.
	afternoon	LANDS OF OPPORTUNITY I. Africa. II. Latin America.
	evening	Free.
April 30	morning	THE MINISTRY OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY TODAY.
	afternoon	LANDS OF DIFFICULTY : 1. The world of Islam. II. Indifference—the secularism of the western world.
	evening	DISCUSSION : What are we going to do about it ?
May 1	morning	SUMMING UP.

This will be the first time that such stress has been given to the meeting of the Functional Groups. The Standing Committee felt that the Functional Group on Visual Aid should be given particular emphasis in view of the general interest in visual aid techniques, and that co-operation in this field is particularly needed if satisfactory results are to be obtained by the various Societies.

O.B.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE LETTER TO MISSIONARY SOCIETIES, DRAFTED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE U.B.S.

Dear Friends,

The Standing Committee of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, gathered at Bad Boll in South Germany for its annual meeting, sends you warm Christian greetings.

This is the first occasion on which we have met since the Willingen meeting of the International Missionary Council. In our sessions we have scrutinized our work in the light of the changing circumstances and conditions of our time and, of course, with the Willingen call to " initiative and mobility " constantly in our thinking. We are aware that the missionary societies throughout the

world are likewise re-studying their strategy and programme. It is regrettable that—often due to the pressure of immediate and urgent tasks—missionary societies and Bible Societies tend to lose touch with one another in their general planning. We should therefore like to take this opportunity of assuring you of our eagerness to co-operate in our common task.

Two relevant conclusions arrived at in our discussions which we should like to share with you and upon which we would welcome your comments are :

First : In this new era of Christian missions the Bible and its effective distribution is of unusual importance. The printed Scriptures can often penetrate where no missionary can go ; they can speak when other Christian voices are silenced ; they can remain when Christian workers are removed from the scene. It seems therefore urgent that both the missionary societies and the Bible Societies should co-operate in giving a central place in strategy to the Bible and its distribution.

Second : Our surveys reveal the fact that in many parts of the world where the Bible is most eagerly distributed, there the Church is growing most rapidly. You will recall the references to this relationship at the Tambaram Conference. To-day the evidence is so widespread and impressive that we cannot refrain from bringing it to your attention.

These conclusions point once again to the importance of colportage. Our Council meeting at Ootacamund in 1952 stated :

> " Colportage is thankfully recognised as a real ministry of Christ in His Church. It has been manifestly blessed by God and from the first has been a fruitful means of evangelism and church planting . . . . It is therefore strongly recommended that the churches should set aside men and women for the full-time work of the distribution of the Scriptures and should give them definite recognition and status."

The Bible Societies have always made use of large teams of full-time colporteurs. However, our primary responsibility lies in assisting in the translation and in the production and supply of the Scriptures. Distribution and use should increasingly become the responsibility of the churches and their missionaries. May we therefore urge you to consider the appointing of full-time missionaries and/or nationals whose responsibility would be the organising and directing of programmes of Scripture distribution through the churches and by voluntary colporteurs in each of the fields which you serve. In turn the Bible Societies will make every effort to the limit of their resources to provide adequate supplies of Scriptures for such programmes.

In considering the recommendations of Willingen that Christian lay-men and women should share more fully in the active spreading of the Gospel, and in the light of experience in many lands, we have come to believe that voluntary lay workers, both members of the indigenous churches and Christian lay-folk from overseas engaged in business, industry or government service, are peculiarly fitted to share in this work of Scripture distribution. Conversely we are convinced that voluntary colportage, in teams or by individuals, offers unique opportunities for lay-folk to give practical expression to their missionary concern. Seizing these opportunities would help give to missionary activity the greater " initiative and mobility " to which the Willingen meeting called us.

We should like to suggest that, in the light of this letter, you call upon officers and missionaries of your society to consider ways and means by which the above suggestions might be implemented within the Christian community which they are serving. We believe that action of this kind, taken at this juncture, may well bear rich fruit.

May God's blessing be upon you in your service in His cause.

Yours sincerely,

EIVIND BERGGRAV
WILLIAM J. PLATT
OLIVIER BEGUIN

Bad Boll, Germany.
8th June, 1953.

By the time this issue goes to press encouraging answers have already been received from several missionary societies announcing their decision to discuss the subject more fully at their next executive meeting. Concrete steps have already been taken in the Philippines, for instance, where three groups of churches have submitted to the Bible Society agent in Manila proposals for improved collaboration.

WIDENING HORIZONS.

Reflections on the U.B.S. Regional Conference at Bad Boll, Germany.

The following are extracts from articles that have appeared in Switzerland and Germany giving the impressions of two delegates to the last U.B.S. Regional Conference, and raising issues which the writers believe need further consideration. The Conference was held June 8th-12th, at the Evangelische Akademie, Bad Boll, Germany, under the chairmanship of Bishop Berggrav and was attended by over 70 delegates from 14 countries.

Pfarrer Otto Naegeli, of Switzerland writes :

WE in Switzerland may be thankful for the wonderful stream of Bibles that flows into the Protestant parishes of our country and also that the work is done by those of all theological shades of thought and different church groups. Every child knows that the Bible is the book of the Reformation ; certain Bible Societies have been active in producing Bibles in the language of the day ; almost every newly-married couple receives the " wedding Bible."

Yet we dare to ask ourselves to-day : are we of the evangelical reformed churches of Switzerland, founded on God's Word, carrying out our obligation in regard to the Bible ? Have we not come to a stop in our activity just at a place where, as responsible churches, we ought not to stop ?

It is a matter for reflection that the work of Bible distribution at home is for the most part done not through the churches nor through the Bible Societies, but through private and to some extent foreign agencies. We are very greatly indebted to the Stuttgart Bible Society alone which, with the exception of the

last war years, has supplied us with its beautiful Bibles. But the British and Foreign Bible Society also worked on Swiss soil for many years, through a colporteur. Thus it is not entirely to our own credit that there is no lack of Bibles in our country.

To-day we are faced with the question : what are we doing to restore the many dusty Bibles to a place of honour ? Is it sufficient to hold Bible lessons, which are very poorly attended—and by women only ? Is it sufficient to arrange Bible courses and camps in which only a very small number of parish members take part ?

Another need is revealed when we direct our attention to the " missionary" countries. All over the continents of Africa and Asia, and in the adjacent islands, a vast process of education is taking place, where each year millions of people are being initiated in the art of reading. They hunger for the printed word in their own language. Is it right that they should find it only in communist literature or in Mohammedan propaganda, which exists in liberal quantities ? Ought we, as the church of the Bible, to be content that the Book of books is distributed in our own land, while in the world outside millions of hands are outstretched in vain for this priceless treasure ?

This and similar questions were considered at the Regional Conference at Bad Boll. The three main themes of the Conference were : The " volks-missionarische " service of the Bible Societies (the responsibility of the Bible Societies at home) : Revision and new translation ; and The missionary service of the Bible Societies. It was apparent from discussions that this was not a question of going over well-worn subjects, but of discussing burning and vital tasks out of personal, intensive experience.

The introducers of the first theme, Pastor Steinweg of Kassel and Pastor Ochsenbein of Strasbourg, agreed on the catastrophic situation in the old evangelical churches of Europe, in which the distribution of the Bible over a period of many years had produced a kind of immunisation. It is not a matter of antipathy to the Bible—indeed its language is not infrequent in sports reports and similar widely-read literature. But the Bible itself is very little read, its voice is scarcely heard and the Evangelical Church is in danger of being robbed of its vital support. What can be done about this ? The best form of help was felt to be in the training of special Bible missionaries, that is to say convinced leaders of the parish who would be ready to give guidance in the use of the Bible, through house to house visits or in public meetings.

As regards " Revision or new translation " it was felt that if the Bible is to be presented to people anew, it must be in a language they understand, and that implies a continual work of revision and translation. Professor Strathmann, from Erlangen, described the struggle over the revision of the Luther Bible and maintained that different editions must be produced : a " real " Luther Bible, with the 1545 text, for Bible-lovers ; a fundamentally revised and modernised edition of the present text and an edition with an inter-ligned commentary, for use in the home. It was clear from discussion that in Germany they are far from reaching unanimity on the question of Bible revision. According to the report of Mr. J. J. Kijne, of the translation commission of the Netherlands Bible Society, Holland has had an extraordinary success with its recently completed new translation of the Dutch Bible and it seems in any case simpler to publish a new translation than to work on an older one to which people have become attached through tradition.

The theme " The Bible and foreign missions " was introduced by a moving report from the General Secretary of the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, Mr. Mahanty. Using as an example the Indian nation, with a population of 450 millions and 230 languages, he described the tremendous need for Bible distribution that exists to-day in may parts of the world. This report, which every Christian with a sense of responsibility must take to heart, led to a discussion, at times quite lively, between representatives of the mission and the advocates of the precedence of Bible work at home, who were in a minority, for whom Prelate Schlatter put in a word. There was no doubt however that the old outlook of operating only in one's own land was for the most part abandoned and that a place must be given in future by the Stuttgart Bible Society and other German and Continental Societies to overseas missionary obligations.

It seemed clear that in this matter a call from God is going out to the world. The simple witness of Bishop Berggrav who described his own conversion to a sense of responsibility for Bible work in missionary countries and the blessing which the Norwegian Church would receive through its new commitments, opened the eyes of all present. This is not a problem needing further long discussion, but it leads to the question : Are we ready to follow God's call and to pass on to others the gift which we ourselves have received and must preserve for the salvation of our churches ?

Dr. Friedrich Linz, of Dusseldorf writes :

ECUMENICAL conferences can lead to great tensions if they are concerned with reaching unity in the multiplicy of human dogmas and forms of worship. These often lead to critical discussions, and to a confirmation of one's own beliefs, and thus to a spiritual estrangement. Ecumenical conferences however, always lead to great enrichment if they are concerned with the application of the spirit of love–whether it is love for the oppressed and suffering, or, as in the case of the work with which the Bad Boll conference was concerned, the service of distribution of the Scriptures. The work of the Bible Societies may be regarded as such a service of love. For the German participants there was, bound up with this insight, a deep sense of shame which we took away with us ; for in this work the home and foreign mission concern of churches in other countries far surpasses that of our German church. The basis of our Bible Societies, and in many cases the present practice, is no more than that of meeting the needs of the parish with the different editions of the Scriptures, for the use of the church at home. " The Bible Societies are really bookshops " said one participant. In the case of some European Bible Societies however, their work is in quite another sense a home and foreign missionary activity. Their work expresses a deep love for those who are lost and the longing to lead them to salvation through distributing and spreading the Gospel of salvation and the Word of the Scriptures.

With us in Germany, however, the missionary service of the church as carried out in home mission and evangelistic work, and the service of foreign missions, have only little to do with the Bible Societies. In the U.S.A., England, France and the Netherlands Bible distribution is one of the most effective means of evangelisation. This holds good to an even greater extent for foreign missions. The Bible or some book of it has been translated into 1,059 languages. How modest, indeed significant, has been German participation in this work of translation. One might even call it non-existent . . . . .

Yet how seriously the participants in the conference took up the practical working out of the suggestions made may be seen from the fact that Prelate Schlatter, in the name of the Stuttgart Bible Society, offered to meet the cost of the first project for printing a translation of the New Testament into a new language.

On the last day of the conference the opportunity was given to the participants to visit the printing works of the Stuttgart Bible Society. In doing so they were equally impressed by the valuable collection of Bible editions from the time of the Reformation to the present, by the technical management of the printing of the different editions, and by the oversight of the extensive stocks of plates, which fortunately escaped war damage.

YOUNG PEOPLE DISTRIBUTE THE BIBLE.

by P. Caufriez

"A Bible for every home!" This wish on the part of a well-known writer is far from being realised in Belgium, where hundreds of thousands of families neither possess nor read the Bible. It is a significant fact that the papal Encyclical "Divino Afflante" concerning the reading of the Bible was read in very few Roman Catholic churches in Belgium. Protestants in Belgium must therefore do what they can to make known and distribute the Holy Scriptures!

The young men and women of the Protestant church of La Bouverie are convinced of this necessity. In 1949 they organised house-to-house visitation throughout their commune (population 8,000) and a neighbouring village (population 2,000). Ten teams, each consisting of two colporteurs, knocked at the doors. The pastor drove by car from one street to another, observing the work of the teams, supplying "ammunition" where needed, and sometimes joining in the more difficult conversations. These ten teams, each comprising one older member and one younger (the ages varied between 15 and 25 years, but with some as young as 10 years), one Sunday sold as many as 160 New Testaments, 14 Bibles and 55 Gospels. Those visited were impressed by the enthusiasm and witness of some of the young people, and the Protestant church of La Bouverie as a result gained several families as members.

Since one likes to repeat one's successes, a group of young people from the parish of La Bouverie, on another occasion, accompanied by their comrades of the church at Paturages, were courageous enough to attempt an evangelisation campaign at Chimay, a small historical town 60 Kms. from La Bouverie. Both the Bible and the Protestant Church were entirely unknown in this bastion of clericalism and superstition, far-removed from the main lines of communication. In July 1952, eighteen young people, with three pastors, after due preparation, pitched their tents at the entrance to the town. Every morning for a whole week the 900 houses in the town received a different tract—by free distribution—leading up to the last two days when New Testaments and Bibles were offered at each door. Two by two these eighteen young people knocked at the doors and offered copies of the Scriptures, published by the Abbaye de Maredsous, for sale. The people were astonished that volumes bearing the imprint of a Catholic publishing house should be sold by Protestants, and in spite of the relatively high price of the Maredsous Gospels or New Testaments, they sold 200 of the former and 14 Testaments, plus one Bible. At a number of houses the teams met with insults, but at others they

had a cordial reception and interesting conversations, so that the joys compensated for the rebuffs. Each evening during the week meetings were held in a rented room, supported by musicians and films sent by the Youth for Christ movement in England. Following the discussions that our teams had with a number of individuals during their campaign, two families invited us to their homes for prayer. Two cases of healing which took place at the conclusion of the prayer meetings in these two houses, resulted in the doors of many other homes being opened to us. The majority of the young people who took part in this mission were below 22 years of age. But they were sustained by the prayer of older people in the background. At La Bouverie, Paturages and . . . . . ., chains of prayer were active throughout the week, from one quarter-of-an-hour to the next, by different families, a timetable having been worked out with great precision.

This special campaign of prayer and colportage really lasted three weeks—one week at Sobre-sur-Sambre, to help the small community of the missionary church there, and another week at Beaumont—a small town where Protestantism has no witness. In the latter, the young people from La Bouverie went several times to distribute tracts and sell New Testaments and Gospels. The series of meetings, held at Beaumont in a huge " evangelisation " tent, was carried out in collaboration with the Belgian Missionary Church* and Youth for Christ. A number of families were converted to the Gospel in that place, and are now being followed up, as was planned beforehand, by the Missionary church. A new evangelical community is thus being formed at Beaumont and neighbourhood.

As regards Chimay, the first town mentioned in this article, within a few months a small church has been formed. In July, 1952 there was nothing ; since October, 1952 a service has been held every Sunday, attended by 40 new converts, with sometimes in addition a few sympathisers or other enquirers. The number taking part has never fallen below thirty, in spite of snow, and so on. A building has just been bought, after a great struggle, by the Union of Churches,** which will set up a small church and manse.

All the credit for these successes belongs to God. We have no right to be proud, for there are still in Belgium 157 towns or communities of more than 6,000 inhabitants in which no evangelical witness is given and into which the glorious message of the Gospel has not yet penetrated. Lord, have pity on Belgium !

A BIBLE CAMPAIGN IN COSTA RICA

by Arthur M. Chirgwin

IN the following article an attempt will be made to describe in detail a Bible campaign that was carried through last year just before Easter in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica. The strong and the weak points will be frankly noted and there will be a brief appraisal of the experiment as a whole.

The idea of the campaign arose at a meeting of the Alliance of Evangelical Churches in San Jose early in 1952. The Alliance includes the Latin America Mission, the Central America Mission (both inter-denominational), the Southern Baptist Mission, the Methodist Mission and the Assemblies of God (Pente-

* Eglise chrétienne missionnaire belge - an evangelical church founded in 1848 in Belgium as a result of the work of colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society and partly supported from abroad.

** Union des églises évangéliques protestantes de Belgique, formed in 1839. The churches which compose the Union are of a Congregationalist type. The Union is the only evangelical church supported by the government of Belgium.

costals). They secured the help of Mr. Ralph Rice, who is in charge of Bible Society colportage work in the Central American republics, to organise the campaign. The period chosen was the two weeks immediately preceding Easter. Under normal circumstances this would have been a good period, for the fact that Easter was near at hand provided a good talking-point to the workers. As it turned out, however, the time was not favourable ; for just prior to the date a faith-healing campaign was launched which attracted a great deal of attention and it even overlapped with the Bible campaign itself. The faith-healing leader was fully co-operative and advocated the reading of the Bible at all his meetings and sold large numbers of Scriptures. But drawing vast crowds as it did and coming immediately before the Bible campaign, it turned interest into a different channel and made preparation difficult.

The Preparation

On arrival in San Jose, Mr. Rice's first task was to work out a plan of campaign with the churches and to train the necessary workers. It was decided to divide the city (which has a population of 87,000) into four parts, and to allot each part to two churches or missions, trying as far as possible to allot the parts to the churches that were strongest in the particular area. It was further decided that within each of the four parts one church should be responsible for the streets that ran from East to West, while the other church should be responsible for those that went from North to South. The workers were to go two by two, one visiting the houses on one side of the street, and the other those on the other side. Each visitor was asked to give information to the pastor about the homes visited, the information to be written up as soon as possible after visiting the house, but not in the presence of the family concerned. One group of visitors—the students from the Baptist Seminary—were supplied with special cards on which they made notes and of which, as we shall see, they made future use.

The Visitors

Workers were asked for in the churches and in the two theological seminaries, and those who were willing to help in the campaign were invited to attend meetings which would be addressed by Mr. Rice. In the case of the seminaries, Mr. Rice was invited to address all the students, and he gave a series of four addresses in both institutions. This was the best piece of training work done, and the students proved themselves to be the best visitors. The workers who enrolled themselves from the churches had, for the most part, one training meeting only. Mr. Rice addressed six such groups in various parts of the city, and did his best to give the same presentation in one meeting as he gave in the four sessions to the seminary students. Every house visitor thus had some kind of preparation for his task. Mr. Rice showed them how to open the conversation at the house-door, how to discover the interest of the family and to build upon it, how to meet objections, how to make a personal testimony and how to evoke interest enough to secure the sale of a Gospel Portion. Those who attended the meetings, and particularly the seminary students who had the fuller course, were most enthusiastic about the help given, and they went to their task with considerable confidence.

The Reception

On the whole the reception was good. In the second week there was some opposition organised by the Roman Catholic authorities, who warned their people against buying any of the " Protestant Bibles." Apart from that the greatest difficulty was the tendency to procrastination : " I'll buy another

time," or "I'll buy next time you call." In secularist homes the answer generally was, "I am not interested," especially if the speaker was a man. The majority, however, listened quietly to what the visitors had to say, especially when they urged that the reading of the Scriptures was the best possible way to prepare for Easter. Mr. Rice had recommended the workers to base their approach on the fact that in a city like San Jose most people know that Easter is a great Christian festival. He not only recommended it, he showed them how to do it. Probably more Scriptures were sold by this approach than by any other argument or artifice. Many conversations took place on doorsteps, and many searching questions were asked and answered. This, in many ways, was the most important feature, the witness of the worker and his personal recommendation of the value of the written Word.

In the two weeks, 18,660 Scriptures were sold, mostly Gospel portions, or an average of over 1,000 a day.

The Results

In the nature of things it is not easy to assess results when what is in question concerns the human heart and will. One leader said that he knew of six people who had stated in a testimony meeting in his own church that they had been brought into the light through reading the Gospel bought at the door or given them by a neighbour during the campaign. The same leader went on to say that only the pastors of the various churches could say how many new worshippers, new enquirers, new members there were as a consequence of the campaign. At present the pastors do not seem to be able to give any precise figures. Whether they will be able to do so, in three, six, or twelve months' time remains to be seen. Certainly there will be further results. The students who were provided with the special cards already referred to, have been encouraged by their Principal to visit every home where they sold Scriptures or where they found that interest was shown. Those students are still visiting those homes week by week, encouraging the family in their Bible reading, explaining the passages read and exercising a pastoral as well as an evangelistic ministry. The influence of the campaign upon the workers will not be the least of the results achieved.

Criticisms and Comments

The campaign was undertaken at the invitation of the Alliance of Evangelical Churches of the city, but the pastors do not seem to have been deeply committed to it in advance. Some of them had other engagements and concerns at the very time the campaign was going on, as though they did not realise that the campaign was their affair. One church frankly acknowledges that it did not play its full part, and did not even complete its quota of house visitations. Another church that threw itself into the campaign with enthusiasm has gained new members and strengthened its evangelistic zeal.

Looking back on the campaign, Mr. Rice himself says that he has learnt two or three things that will guide him in the future. One is that preparation and follow-up are parts of the campaign itself, and that every worker and pastor must realise that from the first. The campaign does not begin and end with the distribution. Another is the need to have complete agreement in advance regarding training of workers, the control of procedure and form of follow-up. A third is the desirability of using a card-system for subsequent visitation of the homes where Scriptures were sold or interest shown. The fourth is the necessity of securing the cordial participation of the pastors from the outset.

A NEGLECTED CORNER OF AFRICA.

by L. V. D. Ashley

I have not seen the office of the United Bible Societies, but it would be no surprise to learn that somewhere on its walls is a map of the world. It may even be, though this is more speculative, that this map is shaded to represent the varying degrees of Bible Society activity in different places. Suppose red to be the colour chosen to indicate degrees of activity, and the greater the activity, the more intense the shade of red : then the whole of Somalia, covering the ' Horn of Africa,' would be tinted so pale a pink that it could scarcely be seen whether it was tinted at all !

Yet Somalia is by no means an unpeopled desert. Putting the populations of French, British, Ethiopian and Italian Somalilands together would give a figure of not less than two millions. Divided though the territory is politically, in other ways—ethnically, linguistically, culturally, religiously—the Somalis are one people, sharing a strong sense of kinship (despite mutual tribal hostilities) and an equally strong sense of their superiority over other peoples. They have effectively maintained their essential independence, although it is more than sixty years since European colonial powers staked out claims to various parts of Somalia, while that shrewd opportunist, Menelik II, King of the Kings of Ethiopia, took advantage of a confused situation to add the Ogaden to his empire.

In religion the Somalis are part of the Moslem world but even now tribal custom and ancient animism are generally stronger than the faith, culture and law of Islam. Contact with the people suggests that the principal effect of Islam is the rather negative one of making them spiritually more inaccessible to the Christian Gospel than they might otherwise have been. But they are physically inaccessible, too, because outside the few towns theirs is the life of the nomad as the tribespeople move to and fro across the country seeking pasture and water for their flocks and herds. For these and other reasons, little has been attempted in the way of Christian missions and much of what was begun at the turn of the century was subsequently liquidated by the colonial governments of the territories concerned. At the present time the situation is that Roman Catholic missions are, not very aggressively, at work in French, Ethiopian and Italian Somalilands ; the Sudan Interior Mission has established one station and is establishing others in the Ogaden (Ethiopian Somaliland) and has a useful work among the Somali colony in Aden ; and the Eastern Mennonite Mission has made a promising beginning in Mogadishu (Italian Somaliland). With the sole exception of the Bible Society, no Christian missions are at present allowed to operate in British Somaliland.

Yet a good deal of Scripture translation has been done both by Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries. Mr. Nylander, of the Swedish Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen, for example, has in manuscript most of the New Testament in Somali ; other translators, again, have made versions of some of the Old Testament books. Of all this translation work only the four Gospels have so far been published—St. Mark was issued by the B.F.B.S. as far back as 1915—and of the editions published, but few books, some hundreds only, have actually been circulated. The brief paragraph on Somalia in a B.F.B.S. Report of the 1930's is typical and revealing : " From Kisimayu the

Swedish Mission report that very few copies of the Somali Gospels have been distributed as yet, because the Somalis cannot read." "The Somalis cannot read ....." The few who could, read Arabic or some European language, not their own tongue. In such circumstances there could be, and until very recently there has been, but little scope for Bible Society activity.

Since 1945 this unpromising situation has been changing for the better. Thousands of Somali boys, and some girls, are now getting a modern elementary education and the rate of literacy is steadily rising—but nowhere is any government-sponsored educational work being done in the vernacular : all is in Arabic and a European language or, in Ethiopia, in Amharic. Officially, Somali is everywhere regarded as in effect an unwritten language, incapable of a literature. Two groups only take practical exception to this dull view : a number of younger, educated Somalis, who have formed themselves into the "Society for Somali Language and Literature," and the Christian missionaries, for whom work in the vernacular is an article of faith. Unhappily, though unavoidably, since missionaries have been almost the only people to show any real respect for the Somali language and to write, print and teach in it, it has come to be widely assumed that anything published in the vernacular must be Christian propaganda—which it probably is !—with the result that a very strong prejudice has been worked up by the people's religious leaders against the literary use of their own tongue. A curious situation ; and one which poses problems the answers to which cannot immediately be seen.

However, it has been possible recently to make exploratory tours in the territory, and the friendly response of administrators and of Somali people themselves, added to the opening-up of evangelical missionary work, gives some encouragement to believe that within a few years much more can be done in the way of Scripture publishing and distribution than has been possible in the past. Meantime, Mr. Trombettas, a Greek merchant at Djibouti (French Somaliland), has been getting out books in a variety of languages ; and now centres of distribution have been established in both the British and Italian Protectorates. Soon, by God's grace, there will be Christian Somalis prepared to go as evangelists to their own people and it will be the Bible Society's* privilege, as it is indeed their active plan, to see that suitable editions of the Scriptures are got ready against the increasing opportunity.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND THE BIBLE

Some notes on the current situation in some countries.

France

A new Roman Catholic periodical is now being published in France under the title "Bible et vie chrétienne" (The Bible and Christian life). The director of this publication is Dom Célestin Charlier of the Abbaye of Maredsous (Belgium) and the publication is sponsored by Cardinals and Bishops in France, Belgium and Canada.

"'Bible et vie chrétienne' is not a review for specialists," says the introduction. "It is directed towards all who feel the need of substantial help in the deepening and strengthening of their faith. Its aim is to be an organ of the Bible movement of to-day ....."

* Bible Society work in Somaliland is in the hands of a joint agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society.

" The issues of ' Bible et vie chrétienne ' as they appear, will provide for the reader a means of introduction to the Bible and a guide not only to the text but also to the spirit of the Bible."

" The idea of starting this review was conceived in a monastery which, by reason of its tradition and of the spiritual basis of its work offers a setting of Biblical experience already in existence : the Abbaye de Maredsous. Many Biblical scholars, from movements in various French-speaking countries, immediately supported this project and promised their collaboration in the work of the revue."

This publication appears four times a year, and began last Spring.

Canada

The new Roman Catholic quarterly mentioned above published in its first issue the following information concerning the Bible movement in Canada. The article is a digest of a report by Georges Bulteau, P.S.S., Professor at the Montreal Seminary :

" Together with Austria, Canada is one of those countries, in which the majority of the population are Catholic, where the Bible movement dates back to before the last World War. Unlike the practice in France, characterised by an abundance of publications of all sorts or of isolated pastoral experiments and produced in different parts of the country, it appears in an organised and somewhat centralised form. Two groups come together to give its orientation —one more pastoral in outlook and the other more scientific.

"The body called Propagande Catholique Romaine de la Bible, founded in 1935 by R. P. Henry Roy, national chaplin of J.O.C.*, obtained its federal charter in 1940 and adopted the name Société Catholique de la Bible. Supported by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Province of Quebec, it is administered by a council of ten members, under the chairmanship of a priest, and at the present time counts 2,000 supporting members.

"Up to the present the Society has only been concerned with distributing the text of the Bible. More than 5,000 copies of the Lille Bible† have been distributed at cost price. In addition to a Canadian translation of the four Gospels, 700,000 copies of a harmony of the Gospels, under the title " This do and thou shalt live," have been distributed. In addition 10,000, Missals and 21,000 Gospels were sent free of charge to Canadian soldiers who served in the 1939-45 war and in the war in Korea. To this distribution of the Bible and of the Gospels must be added the publication of separate passages from the Bible in every issue of eight dailies and a hundred weeklies, under the heading " The Bible speaks to you . . . . ."

"Nor is the Catholic Bible Society alone in maintaining this considerable effort in the realm of propagation of the Bible. Alongside it the radio stations give three weekly broadcasts on the Scriptures. A journal with a large circulation publishes an article on a biblical subject each week. A big bookstore in Montreal gives valuable co-operation to the Bible movement by making known the publications of the Roman Catholic publishing house, le Cerf (Paris) without counting the periodicals *Fêtes et Saisons* (giving information on the liturgical significance of the Church year) ; by distributing with increasing success the Jerusalem Bible ; by disposing of 400 complete sets (12 volumes) of the Bible with commentary by Pirot-Clamer and thousands of copies of the Maredsous Bible. Lastly, the association known as " The 100 Bible col-

* Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique.

† The Bible published under the auspices of Cardinal Lienard of Lille.

porteurs," now called " Messengers of the Catholic Bible," under the direction of R. P. Henry Roy, conducts a very extensive work in Montreal among the working classes by means of Bible tracts.

"To return to the Catholic Bible Society, we may say that, not content with distributing the text of the Bible, the Society is at present engaged in fostering interest in the Bible in the parish, the diocese and the whole country.

"On its initiative the 2nd Sunday in November is observed throughout the country as Bible Sunday, the theme for 1952 having been " The Bible—the story of God." With a view to creating greater interest in this project and of generally intensifying Bible propaganda, the Society is engaged in forming a Bible Service in each diocese. By grouping the laymen around a chaplain who represents them at the business meetings of the Society, this Bible Service can be related to the diocesan committee of Catholic Action. In addition to Scripture distribution and organising the annual Bible Sunday, they arrange courses or Bible evenings, with films. They also collect funds for the work of Bible distribution by organising regular contributions. Although only recently formed, these Bible Service groups are operating in Montreal, Quebec and St. Hyacinthe.

"Again S. Em. Cardinal Leger has founded a Diocesan Service of Bible courses at Montreal. The Bible Centre there arranges a correspondence course for introduction to the Bible. Cardinal Léger, to whom the Bible cause in Canada owes so much, strongly encourages the creation of a Cathol c Bible House in his diocese.

"If one is not mistaken, this intense effort, which in many respects seems rather new in Catholic circles, should not take place only on the level of material organisation, of which the New World holds the secret. The statistics of distribution mentioned above show what is the impetus of the Bible movement in Canada. One feels among the clergy and Christians in general the real desire to rediscover a living contact with the Bible. This renewal reveals itself in its most tangible form in the realm of education. In theological colleges it is hoped to emphasise Bible training for future priests. At the University of Montreal, free courses are offered to students in all the faculties. Bible circles have been formed there, and also with real enthusiasm even in the secondary schools. In the top classes of the primary schools religious teaching is based more on the Scriptures ; many pupils possess their own Bible. Lastly, in the parishes where courses giving an introduction to the Bible are organised, one has the joy of constantly seeing the circles of enthusiasts growing. No doubt this eagerness is somewhat uneven in places, and not without vicissitudes. But it bodes a rich and promising future which one has reason to believe is not far off.

"The popularisation of the Bible is not left at that. Alongside the Catholic Bible Society an Association of Biblical Studies in Canada (Association des Etudes Bibliques au Canada—A.C.E.B.A.C.) was formed, some ten years ago, grouping professors of the Holy Scriptures and related subjects. This Association meets once a year. There works of a purely scientific nature are presented and problems of education discussed. In addition to this annual meeting, and although it insists on keeping its scientific character, the A.C.E.B.A.C. supports the Catholic Bible Society, and is translating the New Testament on its behalf before undertaking a version of the Old Testament, and plans the publication of a commentary on the Gospels ; it has offered its assistance, as far as doctrinal matters are concerned, in the organisation of Bible Sunday. It should be added that, in order to fulfil its desire to encourage Bible study in Canada, the A.C.E.B.A.S. plans to launch a biblical revue."

Germany

It is just twenty years ago that Mgt. Straubinger, active then in Stuttgart (he went shortly afterwards to Argentina) founded the Catholic Bible Movement, which in 1938 took the name of Catholic Bible Work. The aim of the association was " to further the distribution of the Holy Scriptures among Catholic people according to the instructions of the Church authorities and to facilitate for the people, in any possible way, the reading of the Book of books." From the beginning this movement was closely linked with the liturgical movement and with the Una Sancta movement ; it was hampered in its activities during the latter part of the war by restrictive measures of the Nazi government.

One of the main activities of the Catholic Bible Work is to organise biblical courses in the parishes and to encourage expository preaching. The work has a competent man in each diocese who is responsible for fostering interest in the Bible in his diocese.

The organisation claims to have circulated five million complete Bibles and Portions. It also distributed Gospels in French to the French Prisoners of War during the last war. However, since the end of the war the Catholic Bible Work, whose publishing department was closed down in 1944 by the Nazis and in the same year saw its headquarters destroyed in the bombings of Stuttgart, has not resumed any large scale distribution of Scriptures.

In 1946, the Catholic Bible Work again began to publish its quarterly : Bible and Church. It also issues each year lists of daily Bible readings with short commentaries. In collaboration with and/or along with other Roman Catholic publishing houses, the Catholic Bible Work also brings out various books which aim at helping Roman Catholics in their reading of the Bible.

The Netherlands—*Notes provided by J. J. Kijne.*

In 1906 the four Gospels and Acts were published in a new translation by a committee of the Roman Catholic Apologetic Society " Petrus Canisius." This translation was based on the Greek text edition of Brandscheid. The complete New Testament, now based on the Nestle text, was published in 1929.

The Old Testament, translated directly from the Hebrew, appeared in the years 1936-1939. Thus this " Petrus Canisius Bible " was completed and published in 1939 in several editions. Exact pre-war figures are not available. Since 1945 one edition of 37,000 copies of the complete Bible has been published, two Church and school editions of 100,000 copies of the New Testament and a cheap pocket-edition of 75,000 copies of the New Testament (costing Fl. 1.25, or about 2/-).

Also shortly before the war, in 1938, a new translation of the Bible was published. The translation was made direct from the Hebrew and Greek, by two Franciscans. In Flanders a new translation of the New Testament from the original Greek, made by a Jesuit scholar, was published in 1948.

Since 1944 there has been in existence a working-group of Roman Catholic exegetes, called St. Hieronymus, meeting every three months for scholarly discussions. About five years ago this group was commissioned to make a new translation of the Bible, since it was felt that the above-mentioned Petrus Canisius translation could be improved. Of this new translation the four Gospels, Acts and part of the Pauline letters have been completed, but nothing has as yet been published. It is hoped that the publication of the entire New Testament will take place in two years time. The translation of the Old Testament has been decided upon, but work on it has not yet begun.

The translation work of this St. Hieronymus society and Bible study generally is being much helped by the publication of a new series of Old and New Testament commentaries by Roman Catholic scholars. Furthermore in 1941 a Dictionary of the Bible was published, of which a second revised edition is now in preparation. Bible study is also helped by the monthly paper " 't Heilig Land " (The Holy Land), which is entirely dedicated to biblical themes. In addition to the St. Hieronymus society to which the Roman Catholic biblical scholars belong, there is a second society for younger scholars called " Diatheke." Many Dutch Roman Catholics also take part in the annual days of Bible study at Louvain.

In the work at the theological faculty of the Roman Catholic University of Nijmegen and the many seminaries and convent schools, much time is devoted to the study and exegesis of the Bible.

Lastly there are in towns and villages circles of laymen and women who meet together to read the Scriptures, mostly under the direction of a priest, who explains and elucidates difficult passages.

In conclusion it can be said that among Roman Catholics in the Netherlands there is a growing interest in the reading and study of the Bible and that this movement is being encouraged by the authorities of the Church.

BIBLE READING AMONG ROMAN CATHOLICS IN ARGENTINA.

by Charles W. Turner

The Historic Place of the Bible

To get this subject into right perspective and to appraise the present situation correctly it must be remembered that in the year 1564 the Bible was to all intents and purposes closed by Pope Pius IV, at the time of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. (See Mons. Juan Straubinger, *La Iglesia y la Biblia*, p. 12, Buenos Aires, 1947). It must also be borne in mind that the condition of the Church during centuries immediately prior to the Reformation that was responsible in part for inspiring the Reformation movement, provides the necessary clue as to the length of the period during which, within the Christian Church, the Bible had been a *forgotten* book. This undoubtedly accounts for the Bible being an unknown book throughout the whole of the colonial period not only in Argentina but in all Latin America. Roman Christianity which came to the New World with the *Conquistadores* and remained with their successors had no use for the Holy Scriptures. The Bible, therefore, was a closed book until the advent of the representatives of the British and American Bible Societies as precursors of Evangelical Christianity in the early years of the nineteenth century, after the River Plate countries had gained political independence.

Two or three significant facts emerge conspicuously as a result of the foregoing. First, when the Spanish Bible was made available for the first time in Argentina by James Thomson of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the year 1818 it was well received, it made a deep impression on the individual and public mind, and the reading of Scripture was on the way to becoming popularized. The Bible impressed the general populace forcibly in those

early days because it was a completely new book. Some may previously have heard reference to it but they had no access to it. The second fact which emerges is the frank recognition by the first denominational missionaries who came subsequently to these fields, of the essential need of Scripture distribution as the indispensable foundation for their own missionary labours.

Attitude towards Scripture distribution

The effective action of the Bible Societies in Scripture distribution, together with the receptivity manifested by the people of this land could, under the circumstances, lead only to one result. It is common knowledge to-day that from the earliest days the work of Scripture distribution in Argentina and her sister republics encountered strong opposition from the exponents of clericalism and from fanaticized groups and individuals. Since one of the major contributions of Iberian Romanism has consisted of the clerical and dogmatic emphases, to the detriment of intellectual and ethical content, the policy of opposition to and repression of Bible distribution and use has been consistent down the decades, and has been relaxed only within comparatively recent years in the larger and more cosmopolitan centres due in large part to the extensive work of Scripture distribution by the Bible Societies and to the presence of enlightened public opinion. While these facts are not mentioned for controversial purposes, a mere glance at certain biographical books on this subject will reveal the extent of the suffering imposed on good and self-sacrificing men whose lives were devoted to making the Bible known among the Bibleless people among whom they were called to labour.

It will be remembered that three relatively recent papal encyclicals bear constructively on the use of the Scriptures by the faithful : " Providentissimus Deus," promulgated by Leo XIII in November, 1893 ; "Spiritus Paraclitus," by Benedict XV in September, 1920 ; and "Divine Afflante Spiritu," by Pius XII in September, 1943. It takes time, however, for the content of encyclicals to filter down to the level of the laity. The rapidity of this process of transmission usually depends on the interest or lack of interest of the local hierachy and priests. That has certainly been the case in these parts. Only within recent years, therefore, have the texts of these encyclicals been generally made known in Argentina through writings such as those of Mons. Juan Straubinger. During the last fourteen years, Mons. Straubinger, a German scholar and churchman, has been the head of one of the principal Argentine Roman Catholic Seminaries. He has been the leading spirit of what might be called the Roman Catholic Biblical movement in Argentina to which he has devoted apostolic zeal. To him we owe a splendid translation of the Bible from the original languages, not from the Vulgate. The version, as would be expected, contains a considerable number of marginal exegetical notes and comments though these are not as numerous as usually are found in other Roman Catholic versions.

Works of a modern Roman Catholic scholar.

Outstanding among his other numerous literary productions are (1) *Revista Biblica* (Biblical Review), which he founded thirteen year ago, and of which he served as director until his departure from Argentina in November, 1951 ; and (2) *La Iglesia y la Biblia* (The Church and the Bible), Editorial Guadalupe, Buenos Aires, 1944.

. . . *Revista Biblica* is issued quarterly and contains 35 to 40 pages of relevant material. Its purpose is practical : " To awaken and promote a love and appreciation for the Sacred Book which are life and nourishment for the soul, and to introduce readers in a practical way to the wisdom of the Divine Word."

From the beginning it has contained a brief "Seccion Liturgica," (Section on Worship). The contents of the issues have been enlightening and instructive, though an examination of the last four or five issues, published since Mons. Straubinger relinquished the directorship of the magazine due to his departure from Argentina, reveals a large growth of the Section on Worship at the expense of the space given to the chief stated purpose of the publication quoted above.

La Iglesia y la Biblia is a book of about 50,000 words. Its purpose is to show that the Roman Catholic Church has *always* advocated the reading, study and distribution of the Bible. To this end lengthy excerpts are quoted in Spanish from the three encyclicals referred to above, as well as from certain appropriate norms from the "Codigo Canico" (Canonical Code) on the wise use of Scripture. The author then proceeds to expound and interpret these norms pointing out their constructive application to the religious life of the reader. The method in this procedure is didactic and helpful, and, as would be expected, justifies the Roman Catholic position concerning the use by the faithful of "approved" Roman Catholic versions of Scripture which contain "authorized" exepetical and interpretative notes and comments. For example, on page 184 the author expounds what he calls the "application" of the canons he previously quotes. He writes as follows :—

1. "Those who wish only to read or meditate on the divine word to nourish their souls, must use only the editions approved by ecclesiastical authority.
2. Those who are devoting their time to theological and Biblical studies, whether they be priests or laymen, enjoy the privilege of using Protestant editions with the indicated cautions : only if these editions are faithful reproductions of the sacred text, and if they abstain from attacking the Catholic faith. Seminaries are permitted to use Nestle's Greek text of the New Testament offered by Protestant Bible Societies. It is understood that preference must be given to Catholic editions if these are available. In reference to the alleged falsification of the Biblical text by Protestants, which is a topic much used in controversy, it must be observed that Protestants do not use translations from the Vulgate but exclusively versions based on the original texts (Hebrew and Greek, respectively), and only the protocanonical books.
   Consequently numerous differences occur which are sometimes considered as falsifications of the text by those who are unacquainted with the original texts and with the difficulties of translation. (*The writer of this article never before has seen in print in Spanish, and penned by a Roman Catholic scholar, a justification such as the one contained in the two preceding sentences*).
3. It is prohibited to those not engaged in Biblical studies *to use any of the editions of the Protestant Bible Societies*, even though they be offered in Catholic translations. For example, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society offer the Catholic version by Felipe Scio."

Then Straubinger adds in conclusion : "What our Holy Mother (The Church) intends is only to *safeguard the primitive and legitimate authority* of the Bible so as not to give occasion for subjective and heretical interpretations ..... *All Catholics have the right to-day to read the Holy Scriptures*, so long as they observe the regulations which the maternal prudence of the Church has established."

Mons. Straubinger's constructive work as a Biblical scholar and as a Roman Catholic clergyman interested in popularizing the Holy Scriptures may be the beginning of a new and much needed emphasis within the Roman Church not only of Argentina but of all Spanish America *if it is widely accepted by the hierarchy of the whole communion.* Unfortunately, as mentioned above, Mons. Straubinger left Argintina nearly two years ago and is now in Europe, and word concerning his return is quite indefinite.

* * *

Hindrances to widespread Bible reading

1. *The price of Scriptures.*

Now it is evident that inherent in the question of Scripture reading and its encouragement is the important factor of accessibility or availability. To begin with, therefore, the price of cloth-bound Roman Catholic versions in Argentina is incomparably higher than the editions published by the Bible Societies. Most of the complete Bibles are bound in two or more volumes which necessarily adds considerably to the cost. The New Testament alone is difficult to find. Usually it is the four Gospels or the four Gospels and the Book of Acts that are bound together in a small volume. Furthermore, inquiry reveals that all this work of publication is done on a commercial basis,—not under Church affiliated publishing concerns. These factors obviously preclude the possibility of widespread response to Scripture-reading appeals since, regrettably, the essential element of accessibility is absent because the price involved is far beyond the reach of the multitudes and even of the majority of the faithful. The price of a Bible in a Roman Catholic edition in common binding is at best several times that of the Bible Societies' editions.

2. *Lack of effort on local level.*

Then again, an important element essential to a positive response to Bible-reading appeals among Roman Catholics seems to be lacking. While the encouragement is explicit in encyclicals and in the writings of one or another of the Biblical scholars of the communion, there is no visible unified effort within the Roman Church on the local parish level, (which is the essential battle-front where such a campaign must be waged if results are to be expected), urging the people to read the Scriptures and calling their attention to the spiritual benefits of daily Scripture use. There may be, and probably are, exceptions but they represent no more than a very small proportion of the whole. The point is that the idea of Scripture use in Bible reading and study, as Protestants understand it, is still in the earliest of experimental stages among a limited number of the more daring spirits, both ministerial and lay.

One of the principal reasons that confirms this view is the fact that the effort is obviously a pioneering effort in a very real sense since there is little if any background upon which to work. Furthermore, the position as such represents in reality a *new departure* within the Roman Catholic communion. In a editorial contained in the April-June, 1949, issue of *Revista Biblica*, Mons. Straubinger wrote revealingly and courageously as follows :—

> " A foreign magazine has written something concerning a *Biblical movement* in Argentina and has mentioned *Revista Biblica* as the source and centre of that movement. It is true that there is at present more interest in the Bible than heretofore, and that not a few persons through the words of the Book of books have found the way that leads to the Heavenly Father and to Jesus our Redeemer, but to call this a " movement " is far beyond the reality. There are *contrary currents.* Is not the Bible often given the status of a

mere human book which, while it has a place among other books of piety, has no more authority than these? What a degradation this is! Either the Bible is God's book, the inspired and infallible book, or it is not. If it is, it is a thousand times superior to all the books in our library, useful as these may be for piety, and we cannot tolerate that it be merely recommended as one among these. Here precisely is a grave danger : in slipping the Bible, the ineffable and infallible Word of God, in among books written by men and therefore subject to all kinds of errors. The Church maintains with all rigor the divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible and reveres it as the Word revealed by the Holy Spirit, and the Pontiffs are tireless in recommending it as daily reading. How, therefore, is it possible to place it in the category of books which are not infallible and are not fountains of Revelation? . . . . .*Revista Biblica* struggles to reconquer for the Holy Scriptures the preeminent place that belongs to them in the upbuilding of Christian spirituality and conscience . . . . . .It is true that we combatants are few in number,—as small a band as Gideon's three hundred : but if we are as valiant as the Gideonites God will bless our work as He has blessed it up to the present."

In summary it is clear from the foregoing that there is a stirring within Roman Catholic circles of Argentina in favour of Bible reading and study. However, it is far from being a genuine movement in that it cannot be considered a concerted effort on the part of leaders of the communion to popularize the use of the Scriptures among the people within the Church and outside of it. In other words, encouragement of Bible use is still contingent upon the interest of local ecclesiastical authorities. Where Bible reading is advocated it is advocated with explicit and implicit restrictions : the Bibles used must be Roman Catholic editions with interpretative notes. But they may not be accessible in price to the would-be purchaser, or readily available to him in his moment of need or special interest due to the production of relatively small editions on a commercial basis. Moreover, this writer has visited various parish churches in Buenos Aires and has verified that Bibles or parts of the Bible were not available for sale on the premises. Furthermore, the writer knows of no attempt within Roman Catholic circles in the River Plate countries to promote Bible reading or to popularize the use of Scripture in the spirit in which the Bible Societies carry and have carried on their work during over 130 years.

Need to restore belief in the Truth of the Bible

Nevertheless, it is doubtless likely that within these important limitations more people in the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina *are* reading the Scriptures, and this is all to the good. There can be no doubt, also, but that due to this change of attitude within the Roman Church, the Bible Societies with their ready supplies of Scriptures have somewhat easier access to larger numbers of Roman Catholics who otherwise would have been less accessible. This is especially true in the larger and more populous cosmopolitan centres. This is also to the good. But it is likewise true that before Bible reading and study can be popularized on a communion-wide scale among Roman Catholics, in Argentina, or anywhere in Spanish America, much hard work will have to be done on the level of the laity as well as on that of the ordained leadership of the Church. Where complete ignorance concerning the Bible does not prevail, indifference to it or prejudice against it, the result of centuries of neglect, will definitely have to be overcome. A well-nigh instinctive repudiation of the Scriptures by the common man of the Roman tradition, the fruit of ecclesiastical suppression during successive generations, will likewise have

to be surmounted. Obstructions such as these, unfortunately, cannot be made to disappear overnight through the promulgation of a pastoral or an encyclical however sincere and well-intentioned. The Roman Church in these countries will have to persevere unitedly, wholeheartedly and prayerfully to tear down these obstructions which have become attitudes and predispositions in order that the wholesome and purifying influence of the Scriptures and of the living Christ of the Scriptures may have free course throughout her ranks. In other words, confidence and belief in the worth and truth of the Bible *as the revealed Word of God* must not only be taught but must be *restored*. To this end we of the Bible Societies must unite our prayers with theirs that hearts may be touched and wills empowered so that this great and transforming purpose may soon be achieved.

* * *

The Bible Societies and Evangelism

But the task of the Bible Societies does not end here, for in a very real sense there inheres in the situation we have endeavoured to describe a deep and sustained challenge to the Bible Societies which cannot be overlooked and which presents itself as a definite responsibility.

While it is possible that to some the foregoing outline concerning Bible use among Roman Catholics in the River Plate region may present a disheartening rather than an encouraging picture, it must be realized that the situation as it is, with its needs and opportunities, clearly impinges on our own specific task. The best contribution we can make towards helping along the new interest in Bible reading among Roman Catholics, even within the limitations described, is to intensify *our* action in all phases of *our* work. Renewed impetus must specially be given to the promotion of evangelism by means of Scripture distribution. The fundamental problem here presented, therefore, goes straight to the level of the evangelical local churches and to the special relation of the Bible Societies to all these local churches. We must keep constantly before the local churches *their* indispensable need of maintaining a strong missionary spirit which, admittedly, is the primary purpose of the Christian Church. We must stimulate their evangelistic concern and encourage *their* use of the Scriptures in evangelistic efforts both inside and outside of their own church buildings and in the neighbourhoods and districts in which they are placed.

Because of the unique relationship between the Bible Societies and the so-called Younger Churches of these lands, where so large a number of local evangelical churches came into being originally through the Scripture distribution of pioneer colporteurs, the sphere of evangelism is precisely the point where the chief objective of the local church touches the orbit of the Bible Societies. In the discharge of *our* responsibility, therefore, we are called upon in a special way to keep alive the evangelistic glow within each local church and its entire membership by ceaselessly stressing, (1) the fact of evangelism as essential to the true life and function of the local church if the local church is to be a relevant factor in the local community ; (2) the call to evangelism as a definite responsibility of every local church member ; and (3) the use of the Scriptures as the best means to successful evangelism in all its applications.

This very important aspect of our Bible Society service is receiving major emphasis in the River Plate region, with excellent results. Not only does it fill a definite felt need ; it clearly lies within the deep purpose, vision and spirit of the founders 150 years ago when the Bible Society movement first came into being.

ENLISTING YOUTH IN BIBLE SOCIETY WORK

by Bernard J. Tidball

Motive

FEW Christians would question that a permanent underlying motive for supporting a Bible Society is the supporter's own love for the Bible. Behind the Youth Work of the British and Foreign Bible Society from the earliest beginnings right up to the present, there has been the desire to make this motive the chief one in enlisting the support of young people.

In these days, when youth is subjected to invitations, challenges and appeals as bewildering in variety as they are numerous and frequent, youth's support for the work of Bible circulation will not be awakened by pity for a charitable organisation. But young people can be enlisted as partners in a world enterprise which is helping to mould history. First, however, they must be convinced that in the Bible men and nations will find the bread that satisfies their deepest hunger—the bread that gives life—and the young people must have found for themselves in the Bible personal satisfaction for their own spiritual needs. The book which is daily, vitally relevant to their lives is the book they will help to send to Everyman.

Activities and Organisation

Ever since its beginning B.F.B.S. youth work has been educationally based on Bible study and knowledge of the Society's history and work. The Youth Fellowship of the B.F.B.S. consists of several hundred young people between 15 and 35 years, living in every part of the country and belonging to all denominations of the church. Many are students at school or college, the majority are working in trade, craft or profession, almost as diverse as their personal names. Each member may wear the small bronze Sower Badge and is linked to Bible House in London through the writer's quarterly Youth News Letter and various projects undertaken by the Fellowship. Quite recently badges have been applied for in both Australia and Africa.

Youth Groups

In London, Newcastle, Manchester and Bristol, groups of young people have been formed to undertake their own programme of regular meetings, conferences and service to the Society. The London Youth Group, for instance, which has the valuable advantage of centring on Bible House, meets there once a month on a Saturday afternoon and evening throughout the year. Attendances over the past year have averaged nearly a hundred. The day's programme consists of opening devotions, conducted by a Group member, then an address followed by questions and tea. Afterwards Bible study and discussion groups divide up, followed by some practical work. The day concludes with Family Prayers, though many members stay on to do some service for a department of the Society until about 8.0 p.m. The current series of meetings, following an Autumn programme on the Bible and Evangelism, is concerned with "What is the Christian Evangel." During the after-tea sessions, talks and demonstrations are being given on "The Art of Public Speaking" and "The Use of Visual Aids" in preparation for Youth Club visitation by Group members next Winter. Churches in and around London (even from 20 miles away) are well represented at the L.Y.G. meetings. Each Spring a Week-end Conference is held which usually takes the form of Bible study of a particular book or such a theme as "The Bible and Daily Living," "The Bible and Prayer." This year, with the aid of friends from the C.M.J.,* the subject was

* Church Mission to the Jews.

" Christian and Jew at the centre of the World." For several years Group members have taken a large share in the Autumn Public Meeting of the Society, frequently presenting a pageant. Last Autumn a powerful play was given in three separate halls in the London area.

The Newcastle Youth Group has similar meetings and conferences and has for several years taken a leading part in writing and staging pageants of a high standard which thousands of Tynesiders have seen in the City Hall. One event in the annual youth programme is the Day Conference for senior school girls and boys and this is arranged entirely by a committee of young people.

The Manchester group is a younger brother of the family but none the less keen and vigorous. A recent week-end conference in Blackpool saw seventy members of this Group learning about the translations work of the Society and discussing how the world Church and the world's Book came into being.

Bristol is the scene of the latest formation of a Youth Group. For more than a year two young people looked for ways of handing on the good news of the Bible Society's work by which they had been infected at a Summer House Party. Neither girl was endowed with the talents of leadership or public speaking but they both had faith, patience and determination. Towards the close of 1952, with the help of two older Society supporters, a Group of 50 young people were gathered together—each by personal invitation—for me to address. A leader was found, plans were made and are now being implemented: they include active support of adult auxiliary work in the Bristol area.

Perhaps the most significant factor regarding these Groups, large or small, is that each one has sprung up spontaneously instead of being organised from Headquarters. Enthusiasm for the Bible and the Bible Society, engendered at a Conference or at House Parties, has " caught on " when the young people have returned home and a group to learn more and " do something about it " has found itself.

The Harvest

The Society's symbol is the Sower. By wearing the Sower badge members of the Youth Fellowship are constantly reminded of the Society's task of sowing the seed of God's Word. Before receiving a badge they sign this undertaking :—

> " In wearing the Badge of the Youth Fellowship, I undertake to support the world-wide work of the Bible Society by regular prayer and Bible study, gift and service and by enlisting the interest of my friends."

.... *Support by Prayer.* Listed first because it is the most important and without it our gifts can be mere charity and our service but unhallowed, undirected busyness. Our young people join their older friends in regular intercession for the Society and its servants and in addition several Prayer Cells engage in daily prayer for particular needs.

.... *Support by Bible Study.* What farmer would go on to his land with seed he had not chosen and without knowledge of its worth and the crop he expected? We want our future supporters to be Bible lovers. There is encouragement in reading a letter like one written after the 1952 House Party, containing these words :—" I had no idea that the Bible was such a thrilling book. I shall certainly continue my daily study of it when I get home."

.... *Support by Gift.* The complaint that modern young people do not give as they should cannot be sustained in respect of youthful friends of the Bible Society. When the present Bible House was built one shilling in every pound was contributed towards the cost by young people. In recent years

they have sponsored the following versions : St. John in Walamo for Ethiopia —£50, the Jingphaw New Testament & Psalms for Burma—£225, the Kirundi or Rundi New Testament for Africa—£550 and the Third Jubilee project is £4,000 towards the cost of the Union Swahili Bible for East Africa.

The giving of many is steady and regular, like that of the girl who recently sent in £4. 10s. 0d. with an apology that she had not quite kept to her aim of saving a shilling in every pound ! One young supporter gets over £10 each year in a box he keeps on his office desk, to which all callers are invited to contribute. Another canvasses amongst three groups of clubmates who share her hobbies—photography, horse-riding and politics ! Every December the L.Y.G. puts up a stall at the Bible House Sale of Work, and to it come saleable gifts that young people have bought or made which realise an annual average of £30.

. . . . *Support by Service.* One sure way of developing love for a person or a cause is the way of service, and the growing love of young Christians for the Bible Society is in many cases the direct result of some service rendered. Teams of speakers have visited Youth Clubs and Sunday schools to testify by word and visual aid to the value of the Bible and the importance of the Bible Society. More are being trained for next winter. Plays and sketches have been written and performed, pageants presented, exhibitions staffed. Visual aid material has been made, envelopes addressed, costumes repaired, collection of money undertaken. Individual young people also serve on auxiliary committees where opportunity offers, give clerical help to local secretaries, find openings for school visitation.

. . . . *Support by enlisting the interest of friends.* By far the most valuable form of recommendation is that based on personal experience. This applies as much to commending the Bible Society as to selling soap ! Would there be any need for an organised Bible Recall if every Christian could say to his neighbour : " this book has changed my life—try it " ?

Each year many new youngsters attend the Summer House Parties which constitute a major feature of our Youth Work. How do they know of them, where do they hear of them ? Not from press advertisements but through the personal invitation of a boy or girl : " You must come next year ; I am going again, wouldn't miss it for the world." Thus new young people are constantly being brought within the range of our influence. Each badge wearer undertakes to enlist the interest of his friends—the badge itself is intriguing enough to arouse interest. We expect our young supporters to emulate Andrew of old, as all Christians should, in office, school, home or works.

So much for the more tangible tokens of harvest. But what of the aspects known only to the Lord of the Vineyard ? Who but He knows of the sowing in individual hearts, the new discipleships, the more dedicated lives, the re-orientation of service ? True, we could name men and women who gladly testify to the inspiration of a Bible Society youth meeting or conference as being the start of their road to the mission field, the home ministry or to some other Christian vocation. True, we have been privileged over the years to watch many a youngster who has grown up in the faith, become Sunday school teacher or youth club leader, circuit steward or lay reader. We can think of homes where young Christian parents are bringing up their children in the knowledge and love of God. Some of these parents came from a non-Christian background with no Church allegiance. At Bible House or at a Youth House Party they found God in the Christian fellowship, began their Christian pilgrimage and then sought His Church and founded a Christian home.

And yet while we give thanks for the sowing opportunities God has given us it is not for us to look for the harvest. It is sufficient if our Society lives up to the British part of its name and sows the seed, His Word, in the hearts of the young folk it can reach here at home.

Loyalties

It is sometimes questioned whether membership of the Society's Youth Fellowship conflicts with existing loyalties to church, denomination or missionary cause. Bible Society history provides the answer—No. One of the thrilling aspects of Bible Society work has been the drawing together of different branches of the Church. It happened at the first public meeting of the B.F.B.S. ; it happens regularly to-day at auxiliary annual meetings all over Britain. Similarly, the Society's youth activities create no rivalry, rather they link up young Christians together in worship and witness. As the Society supplies the Churches of the world with their Scriptures, so our youth meetings and conferences provide the vision of the world Church and challenge the young people to apply their talents and energies to their own particular church. The writer can count young leaders in his own pastorate whose churchmanship benefited directly and considerably from the ecumenical fellowship experienced at Bible Society Youth House Parties. At these Summer gatherings we worship and work together learning from each other, but opportunity is always given to all members to attend churches of their own denomination on Sunday mornings. Our joint sessions serve not to ignore or obliterate our differences but to emphasise our oneness in Christ. One particularly happy feature of these House Parties has been the presence of overseas friends. In 1952, for example, Nigeria, China, Japan, Ceylon, France, Germany, Switzerland and Morocco were represented. And we welcomed members of our staff overseas—from North Africa, Greece and Yugoslavia. All these friends appreciated the fellowship and we certainly gained much from them both in the more serious sessions of conference and the gayer moments of recreation.

Third Jubilee

Mention has been made of our young people's aim to raise £4,000 for the Swahili Bible. Other Jubilee aims include more witness by young people to young people, especially by teams visiting neighbouring clubs and fellowships to give talks, present plays, show films or exhibits. The production of more drama material for use by youth is also in hand. Short training conferences are particularly emphasised as a means of equipping young supporters in the service of the Society. At these conferences in addition to Bible study and talks on the Society's work, instruction is given in drama production, building visual aids, public speaking and film projection. We want to raise our membership to 1,000, though no kind of pressure will be used to achieve this for mere numbers count for little.

Finally, in accordance with the second aim of the Third Jubilee, we want to call youth to the Bible. For the majority it will be call rather than recall, and a vital call it is. As we say in the 'Youth and the Third Jubilee' pamphlet, "Activities are not enough and Bible study is essential for those who would know the measure of their task and find the inspiration to accomplish it. The young Communist is dependent on *Das Kapital* and knows it. Even more is the young Christian dependent on the Bible—does he know it ? One of his deepest needs is to know the Bible message thoroughly, to see its present-day relevance clearly, and to be able to apply it definitely in every contemporary situation. The Bible Society is ready to help young people so to equip themselves."

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS BIBLE SOCIETY AND THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

by P. Boendermaker

IN his Editorial in the January issue of the U.B.S. Bulletin, M. Béguin, commenting on the annual report of the Lutheran World Federation, was struck by the fact that there was in that report an almost complete lack of reference to Bible Society work. The conclusion he draws from this is that the Lutheran Churches disregard the essential task that the Bible Societies perform on behalf of the Church.

As a member of the Board of the Netherlands Bible Society and as a "liaison officer" for co-operation in Bible work accredited by the Lutheran Church, I wish to express the gratitude of the Lutheran Church in Holland towards the Netherlands Bible Society.

The Dutch Lutheran Church has never used the "Statenvertaling" (the States General Version, i.e. the Dutch Authorised Version in use in the Dutch Reformed Churches). In 1648 the Lutheran Church accepted a translation (by the Rev. A. Visscher) of the German Bible of Martin Luther. During the last century this translation has very often been revised and modernised. As a result of the co-operation between the Lutheran Church and the Bible Society this Lutheran Bible (with the Old Testament Apocrypha) has continually been published by the Netherlands Bible Society in two different sizes. These editions were very expensive : the Lutheran Church in Holland has always been small, therefore the Bibles were never sold on a large scale. High production costs, because of the small editions, combined with long periods of circulation involved big investments. Nevertheless the Bibles were sold by the Netherlands Bible Society at a price only slightly higher than that of the "Statenvertaling."

About 1920 the Lutheran Church was at work on a revision of the text. In the meantime there was a threatened shortage of Lutheran Bibles. The Netherlands Bible Society, however, was quite willing to give a small photographic reproduction in order to bridge the gap.

These services rendered by the Bible Society to the Lutheran Church at a substantial loss in interest and through reduction in price, have always been very much appreciated by the Church. On their side many members of the Lutheran Church are co-operating with the Bible Society in committees and local boards.

In 1951 the Synod of the Lutheran Church was first to accept the new translation of the Bible of the Netherlands Bible Society as its official version. This gesture was proof of the great confidence the Lutheran Church had in the work of the translating committees of the N.B.S. The N.B.S. published a special Lutheran edition of the new translation to which the Apocrypha (in the old translation) had been added. In 1953 the Board of the Netherlands Bible Society decided to make a new translation of the Apocrypha for use in the Lutheran Church.

I do not know what relation there is in other countries between the Lutheran Churches and the Bible Societies, but I felt it as a debt of gratitude to give some facts about the whole-hearted co-operation between the Netherlands Bible Society and the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands.

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